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HISTORICAL SKETCHES

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HISTORICAL SKETCHES

OF THE

REIGN OF GEORGE SECOND

By MRS OLIPHANT

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

35576

"THE WEB OF OUR LIFE IS OF A MINGLED YARN, GOOD AND ILL TOGETHER; OUR VIRTUES WOULD BE PROUD IF OUR FAULTS WHIPPED THEM NOT; AND OUR CRIMES WOULD DESPAIR IF THEY WERE NOT NOURISHED BY OUR VIRTUES."

—*All's Well that Ends Well.*

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
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TO

LEILA MACDONALD

THIS BOOK

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

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I

THE QUEEN

THE QUEEN.

THERE is something in the position of sovereign which seems to develop and call forth the qualities of a woman beyond that of any other occupation. The number of reigning women has no doubt been very limited, but it is curious to note how kindly the feminine mind takes to the trade of ruling whenever the opportunity occurs to it. It is, perhaps, the only branch of mental work in which it has attained a true and satisfactory greatness. The only queen-regnant we know of who was nobody was our own placid Queen Anne. Such names as those of Isabella of Castile, of Elizabeth, and Maria Theresa, are very illustrious examples of this fact. The historian cannot regard those princely personages with the condescending approbation which critics in every other branch of science and art extend to women. They are great monarchs, figures that stand fully out against the background of history in the boldest and most forcible lines; and that in very absolute con-

tradiction to all conventional theories. The name at the head of this page is not that of a historical personage of the first eminence ; but it is that of a very remarkable woman, who holds no insignificant rank in the long line of English sovereigns. The period is called the reign of George II.; but so long as her life lasted, it was Caroline who was the Queen.

The Guelph family, at least in its beginning, does not furnish us with any very interesting or dramatic group. The first Georges are historical characters only because they cannot help themselves—fate and the Protestant succession having been too many for them. They would without doubt have been more honoured, more respectable, more at their ease in every way, had the prickly circlet, of which the fifth Harry complained, never been placed upon their homely brows. It was no doubt a painful metamorphosis for the German "Lairdie," the obscure Elector, whom nobody expected to cope with a Grand Monarque, or take up the traditions of an imperial court, to emerge out of his jolly little uncleanly Teutonic paradise, and submit himself to the caustic inspection of Whig wits and Jacobite sneers. It was the greatest sacrifice of comfort to grandeur that has been made in modern times. These royal gentlemen have been weighed in a great many balances of late years, and the result has not been flattering to them, though it has not left them altogether without credit. We do not propose to reopen the record. The little monarch, with "his right leg well forward," and his "eyes *à*

fleur de tête," and the "dapper George" who succeeded him, have had more than their share of discussion. But from the year 1727 to 1737 there was another monarch in England whose name was not George—a woman not unfit to take her place among the reigning princesses. Queen Caroline is even a greater contradiction to every ordinary theory which ordinary men frame about women, than are the other sovereigns who have proved the art of government to be one of the arts within a woman's powers. Every ideal of a good wife which has ever been conceived by man makes out the model woman to be furiously jealous and vindictive over the mere suspicion of infidelity in her husband. Has not some one said that every wife is a Queen Eleanor in her heart?—and it is not only the good woman who is subject to this infirmity: the light-minded, the careless, even the guilty, show the same ruling passion. She who sins herself is not made indulgent thereby to her partner's iniquity. It is the one fault which no woman forgives. And again, the popular imagination supposes that maternity destroys all power of discrimination in a mother. She may be wounded, injured, insulted by her children; she may see them do everything that is base and miserable; she may watch them sink into the lowest depths of degradation; but she will love and believe in them still. To these two fundamental principles of a woman's nature, there is scarce a creature in Christendom who would not seal his or her adhesion. They lie beyond or above all argu-

ment. They are proved, and over again proved, every day.

Queen Caroline gives a dead contradiction to both. She was an admirable wife; but her husband made her the confidante of his *amours*, and told her about his Rosamonds, and yet she never poisoned, nor thought of poisoning, one of them. She does not even seem to have been jealous. Her historians, moved by the utter impossibility, according to all preconceived notions, of such extraordinary philosophy, pick out here and there the faint little snub bestowed upon "my good Howard," to show that in her heart this instinct of nature existed warmly enough, though in constant control. But the examples do not bear out the suggestion: for it is hard if a lady, not to say a queen, may not snub her bedchamber-woman for her pleasure without any deeper motive. And she despised and disliked her son. We are aware that to say these words is as much as to give her cause over before every domestic tribunal. Monster! does not every one say? Yet Caroline was no monster. She was a woman and a foreigner, and yet she was more actively and urgently Queen of England than any other except Elizabeth: she was a wife, and yet she varied the form of conjugal wickedness by almost encouraging her husband in his infidelities: she was a mother, yet gave up, despised, and opposed her son. For the first of her contradictory qualities, that of power, she sins in company with other illustrious exceptions to the common theory;

but in her other faults she stands alone, or almost alone.

It is a difficult task to apologise for or explain such wonderful incongruities. They contradict at once the conclusions of experience and those certainties which are intuitive and above discussion. If a woman in fiction had been created with such failings, even had she been the highest heroine of tragedy, she would have been flouted as an impossible creature. She would be false to nature. But the real woman is very true in fact, and takes no heed about being true to nature. It is the one great advantage which fact has over invention, and the historic over every other Muse. There are no unities, no consistencies, no rule of probability, to bind the free current of real life. What a poet dare not dream of, existence produces calmly, contradicting its own laws, setting aside the very principles on which its continuance and stability are founded. But the character in which such extraordinary contradictions exist cannot be a simple or superficial one. And the office of the historical student is not to defend, notwithstanding the general rage for rehabilitation, which has changed or attempted to change so many of our landmarks, but only to record, and if possible to explain.

Caroline was born the daughter of a Duke of Anspach, one of the cluster of little German houses to which, for so many generations, we have owed our royal wives and husbands. She was brought up under the care of a princess of the house of Brunswick, the

mother of Frederick the Great, and the daughter of the old Electress Sophia, of a stock to all appearance both sweeter and stronger in its feminine branches than it has ever been in its men. The first event in her life is as contradictory at the first glance to all its future tenor, as the strange qualities which distinguished her in after-life are contradictory to her womanhood. It is said that she was chosen by the King of Spain as his bride, under condition of abandoning the Protestant faith and becoming a Catholic. Such a change was (and indeed we suspect is) no such dreadful matter in the German matrimonial market, where princesses are trained to bless the world. And Caroline, far from being a bigot, or disposed to exaggerate the importance of religious distinctions, shows few symptoms of any religious conviction whatever. She refused, however, this advantageous bargain. Her faith, such as it was, seems to have been more to her than the unlucky but then splendid crown which was laid at her feet. "She could not be prevailed on to buy a crown at so dear a rate," says Bishop Burnet. Perhaps at that early period of her existence some lingerings of childish devoutness might be in the mind of the young princess; but there can have been very little piety round her, and she showed small sign of any in her after-life. The real cause of her resistance probably was, that her mind, though not religious, was essentially Protestant, as a great many minds are, especially in Germany. The Protestant intellect still exists and flourishes,

though not always in distinct connection with a Protestant faith; and is a far less conquerable thing than any system of doctrine. In such a constitution, a determined dislike to submit to authority, to bind the spirit down to obedience, or even to profess subjection in matters with which the intellect has so much to do, is infinitely stronger than the faculty of belief. Caroline, we suspect, would have been very vague in any confession of her faith; but it is easy to perceive how difficult the profession of Catholicism would be to a woman of such a character and mind.

"Her pious firmness," adds the bishop-historian, "is likely to be rewarded even in this life with a much better crown than that which she rejected."

It was to make Great Britain happy, as all the poets twittered, that the choice was made; and she married her George shortly after, and lived with him, in the most singular version of married life perhaps ever set before the world, for more than thirty years. To judge it or her by the rules current among ourselves at the present day would be both unjust and foolish; but happily the chroniclers of the time have left us in little doubt about the manners and customs of that babbling and talkative age. It is painful to think how little of the same kind of pleasure our descendants, a hundred years hence, will get out of us. Thanks to Sir Rowland Hill (and many thanks to him), we, as a nation, write letters no more. And somehow, notwithstanding the contradiction which statistics would throw in our face did we venture on

such an assertion, there do not seem to be so many of us afloat in the world nowadays as there were in the period when Horace Walpole corresponded with his friends. There is no such hum as of a crowd breathing out of the mingled mass of society where fashion and politics rival and aid each other. In the days of the great Horace the buzz filled the air; quiet people heard it miles off, counties off; now a great *bourdonnement*, filling their ears like the sound of the waves of life in the City when you stand within the silent aisles of St Paul's, and listen;—now scraps of distinct talk, like those you catch by intervals on the skirts of every assembly; now an opening of the crowd as some one comes or goes—now a gathering of the countless mass, as some pageant forms within its enclosure. We are more listless now, and speak lower, and don't enjoy it. It is a polite whisper, or it is a slow funeral drawl, the words dropping dolefully and at intervals, like signal guns, which alone reaches us out of the crowd. And somehow there does not seem so many people about; they are climbing the Alps, and crossing the seas, and lecturing at Mechanics' Institutes, and writing pretty books—perhaps; or perhaps they are only of a lower vitality, and make less noise, like the good children. When our great-grandsons write our history, they will feel the difference; for the newspapers, which none of us much believe in, will probably have made themselves utterly incredible by that time, and have ceased to be referred to. Let us hope that the New Zealander

will bring over with him some old packets of yellow letters written to the first colonists. In these, and in the big mails that go to India, the budgets of news for the boys who are out in the world, lie our only hope of domestic records in the present silent age.

The Court of George II., however, lies open in a full flood of light. Not only do everybody's letters contribute towards its illumination, but the curious Memoirs of Lord Hervey, unique in history, present it before us with a remorseless and impartial distinctness. To say that we know it as well as if we had lived in it, is little. We know it infinitely better. We know what everybody said when the royal doors were closed, and minister or bishop discussed the most important of national affairs with king or queen. Had we but been about Court at the moment, the extent of our observation could not have gone further than to remark how Sir Robert looked when he left the royal presence, or if Bishop Hoadley was cheerful after his audience. And it is not a pleasant spectacle. The age was not one in which man believed in man, nor in woman either, for that matter. If wits were not sharper, the tongue at least was less under restraint. And morality, as we understand it nowadays, does not seem to have had any existence. Most people behaved badly, and nobody was ashamed of it. To be sure, a great many people behave badly at all times; but, at least, the grace of concealment, of decent hypocrisy, of outward decorum, is general in the world. There was no con-

cealment in those days. The ruling classes lived coarsely, spoke coarsely, sinned coarsely, without any illusion on the subject. The innocent and virtuous were little less indecent than the gross and wicked. Good wives, and even spotless maidens, discussed, without any pretence of shame or attempt at secrecy, the nasty adventures going on around them. The age was depraved, but it was more than depraved—it was openly unclean. And yet many notable figures circulate in this wicked and gossiping and unsavoury crowd. The wickedness and unsavouriness have been largely discussed and set forth to the fullest vantage; yet there are higher matters to discuss, into which it is possible to enter without falling absolutely into the mire. It is hideous to hear the old King talking of his favourites to his wife's unoffended ears; but the story of their life together—of her rule, of her wisdom, her extraordinary stoicism and patience, her good sense and infinite reasonableness—is a very curious, almost unique, and often most touching tale.

There is one thing to be remarked to begin with, as a circumstance which explains much in the life of Caroline. It is only after she had attained the fullest maturity of mind that she takes her place in history. Such a hapless passionate existence as that of Mary Stuart is over and closed for ever before the age at which Caroline begins to be fully apparent to us. Therefore, naturally, her virtues and her faults are both of a different kind from those which are likely

to distinguish the earlier half of life. This of itself throws a certain light upon her wonderful conjugal tolerance. She was above forty when she came to the throne of Great Britain. Before a woman comes to that age she has learned much which seems impossible to youth. In a barren soil, it is true, cultivation can do but little, and there is many a woman who is as much a fool at forty as if she had still the excuse of being in her teens. But with the greater portion of reasoning creatures maturity makes a difference. It teaches patience first of all; it teaches the absolute want of perfection that exists everywhere, even in one's self. It makes the human soul aware of its incapacity to enter altogether into another, and to be possessed of its most intimate motives; and it exalts the great objects of family peace, honour, and union, of prosperity and general respect, and sober duty, above those enthusiasms of love and perfectness which are natural and seemly in youth. A young woman who had been as tolerant as Caroline would have been simply a monster. But a royal soul, on the heights of middle age, having lived through all the frets and passions of youth, without becoming a whit less natural, separates itself from much that once seemed necessary to its existence. Far be it from us to say that love perishes in the growth and progress of the mind. But love changes. It demands less, it gives more. Its gifts are not always flattering to the receiver, because it is—alas!—impossible that it should always retain the fairy glamour in its eyes, and think

all excellence centred in the object of its regard. It is a favourite theory with young people, and chiefly with young women, though one to which common life gives the lie daily, that when respect is gone love dies. Love, let us be thankful, is a much more hardy and vigorous principle; it survives everything—even imbecility, even baseness. Its gifts, we repeat, are not always flattering to the receiver; instead of the sweet thoughts, the sweet words, the tender caresses, and admiring enthusiasm of its earlier days, it often comes to be pity, indulgence, even endurance, which it gives; and that with a terrible disinterestedness—"all for love, and nothing for reward," with no farther expectation of the recompense without which young love breaks its heart and dies. Old Love, by long and hard training, finds out that it cannot die; it discovers that it can live on the smaller and ever smaller footing which experience leaves it. Like a drowning creature on its one span of rock, it lives and sees the remorseless tide rising round it. It survives ill-usage, hardship, injury of every kind, even—and this is a mystery and miracle, which few can understand—in some strange way it survives contempt. Men and women continue steadily—as the evidence of our own eyes and ears will tell us—to love women and men upon whom they cannot possibly look but with a certain scorn. They are disenchanted, their eyes are opened, no halo hangs any longer over the feeble or foolish head which once looked like that of a hero. His wife has to shield

the man from other people's contempt, from blame, and the penalties of misdoing. She cannot, standing so near him, shield him from her own ; but her love, changed, transfigured, embittered, exists and warms him still.

The only distinct incident of Caroline's youth which has escaped oblivion is that about the offered crown which she would not buy with the sacrifice of her Protestant birthright. History is silent as to her early married life, and perhaps it is as well. How she may have struggled against her fate we cannot tell ; and probably it would not be an edifying tale. She came to England in 1714, a young mother with her children, and not till some years after does she even appear as a centre of society in her new country. When the quarrel between her husband and his father broke out openly, the Princess of Wales began her individual career. The pair did what so many heirs-apparent have done—they set up their Court in avowed opposition to the elder Court, which rarely holds its own in such a struggle. In this case it had less than the usual chance. The elder Court was dull, and coarse, and wicked. It had no legitimate queen ; and no charm, either of wit or beauty, recommended its feminine oracles, who were destitute of any claim on the respect of the nation, and were openly sneered and jeered at by high and low. On the other hand, the Court of "the Waleses," to quote the familiar phraseology of the nineteenth century, was young, gay, and bright, full of pretty women and

clever men. The Princess herself was in the bloom of her age, handsome, accomplished, and agreeable. Among her attendants were some of the heroines of the time—the "fair Lepell," the sweet Mary Bellenden, the "good Howard," whose names are still as familiar as if they had been shining yesterday upon an admiring world. "The apartments of the bedchamber-woman in waiting," says Walpole, "became the fashionable evening rendezvous of the most distinguished wits and beauties." Pleasure of every kind and complexion was the occupation of this royal household. It had little influence in public affairs, and no place in the national economy. It was free to enter into all the gaieties of a private house, with all the splendour of a palace. Such a position, unofficial, unrestrained, without the curb either of filial or public duty, is in most cases more pleasant than safe.

But the breach between the father and son was too desperate to give the Prince any power of mischief, so far as the affairs of the country were concerned. And he was not more depraved than it seems to have been considered his princely duty to be, as a man equal to the responsibilities of his position. He had a "favourite," because, in the abominable code of the time, such an appendage was thought necessary; and George's dull sense of his duty in this respect would be whimsical if it was not vile. But, strangely enough, he was all the time a man under the most perfect domestic management. And, more strange

still, the woman who was his mistress gives even a prejudiced inquirer an impression of genuine *goodness*, sweetness, and truth, which it is hard to reconcile with her miserable position. For ten years a racket of pleasuring was kept up at Leicester Fields. The laughing Opposition jeered and jested, and made epigrams, and made love. The saucy maids of honour laughed at the little Prince to his face. They indulged in all kinds of obsolete merry-makings. They hated the King and his Dutch Queens, and his powerful Minister. When the old George ended, and the new George began, what change was to be in the universe! Other laws, other policy, a different *régime*, with everybody in place who was out, and everybody out who was in, and a general reversal and delightful jumble of heaven and earth. So everybody believed, and so the Prince of Wales fully intended in his choleric soul. But master and servants alike reckoned without their Princess. While the racket went on around her, while her naughty little husband made love before her face, and his courtiers laughed in their sleeves, wise Caroline kept her bright eyes open—those eyes of which Walpole says, "that they expressed whatever she had a mind they should"—and looked on and pondered. She was "*cette diablesse Madame la Princesse*" to her charming father-in law. She was in opposition, like the rest, naturally set against the powers that were. From her, even more than from her husband, might have been expected a desire to cross, and thwart, and

run in the face of everything that had been before her. *Nous allons changer tout cela.* What other sentiment could be expected to rise in the breast of a clever and impatient woman, as she stood by for years and watched the Germans at St James's buying and selling, and the old King who had driven herself out of his palace, and kept her daughters as hostages, petting his favourite Minister? Could anybody doubt what her feelings must have been to the whole obnoxious group — King, Jezebels, Premier — who kept all influence out of her hands? And she was German, like all the others, and knew as little by nature what British policy ought to be. She must have sat still, impotent, and watched what they were about, as she ruled her little Court, and led its pleasures, for ten long years. And the country, and the Prince, and the expectant statesmen, and even the Prime Minister himself, felt in their hearts, when the end came, how it must be.

It would be curious to inquire how it was that this woman knew better than all the people about her: how it was that she resisted the natural impulse of opposition, and all the temptations of vengeance and novel delights of power. There are various petty explanations suggested, as might have been expected. Sir Robert Walpole believed that it was his own cleverness in finding out from the first that her influence and not that of her rival was all-powerful with the King. Others considered it to be the direct court which his adversaries paid to Lady Suffolk.

Caroline's conduct gives little warrant either to the one supposition or the other. A far more rational and obvious conclusion, as well as one infinitely more worthy and more characteristic, would be, that the spectator thus standing aside so long to watch with the keen interest of a future ruler the course of affairs, honestly perceived that the most skilful hand in the country was already at the helm, and made up her mind to sacrifice her prepossessions to the good of the empire. Not Prince Hal when he rebuked his ancient ally more startled and amazed his expectant followers than did the new King when, sulky and unwilling, he took his father's Minister to his counsels, and turned the comforters of his humiliation away. How "he as *King* came to consult those whom he never would speak to as *Prince*, and to admit no farther than the drawing-room at St James's those favourites who had ever been of the *Cabinet* at Leicester House; in short, how he came to pursue the very same measures in his own reign which he had been constantly censuring and exploding in his father's," is, Lord Hervey concludes, a wonder which everybody will be curious to know the reason of. Curiosity on this point has much decreased, no doubt, since he wrote; but it is as striking a political event as any in our modern history. And at this distance, when all the figures are rounded by time, and the far-off beholder has a chance of arriving at a more correct judgment than the spectator who is on the spot and sees too much, the question is still inter-

esting. George made this lame but wise conclusion as unwillingly as ever man did anything he could not help doing; and he did it because Caroline had been studying all the circumstances while he was amusing himself, and because she had the true wisdom, the supreme good sense, of putting her animosities in her pocket, and electing to do that which was best for the nation, as well as for the stability of her own family and throne.

When the news of the death of George I. reached England, the first act of the new King was exactly what was expected of him. He referred Sir Robert Walpole, who brought him the news, at once and ungraciously to Sir Spencer Compton, who had been his treasurer as Prince, and acknowledged partisan. Sir Robert accepted the decision as the most likely and natural one. "It is what I, as well as the rest of the world, expected would be whenever this accident happened," he said, according to Lord Hervey's report, to the new authority. "My time has been: yours is beginning." Then there came an awful pause of fate. England, which needed wary steering in those days, found herself suddenly for a breathless moment in the hands of George and Sir Spencer Compton. There is a certain grim fun in the situation, as of a couple of astounded pigmies left suddenly all at once to do a giant's work. Perhaps the King, had he been his own man, and not under lawful rule and governance, would have had courage to try it; and for a moment the crowding spectators who came

to kiss hands, and those who made Leicester Fields ring with the sound of their applauses, expected it was to be so. But the second of the dwarfs was not so brave as his master. Either the joy of the triumph or the fear of responsibility overwhelmed the poor man. He had a speech to make for the King, and making King's speeches was not his *métier*. He turned abject and dismayed to the dismissed Minister, who had just asked and received the promise of his protection. He begged like a schoolboy over his verses that Sir Robert would do it for him this time, till he got into the way of it. It was pure imbecility, or fate; for, as Lord Hervey remarks, "if this precedent-monger had only turned to the old Gazettes published at the beginning of former reigns, he might have copied full as good a declaration from these records as any Sir Robert Walpole could give him." Such acts of folly mark the difference between the man who can and him who cannot. Sir Robert, no doubt, smiled as he retired into a room by himself, to do his rival's work. He had promised not to tell, "even to the people in the next room;" but when the new Minister had taken the speech in his own handwriting to the King, a discussion arose about it, in which again Sir Spencer appealed to his predecessor. Queen Caroline, we are told,* "a better judge than her husband of the capacities of the two men, who had silently watched for a proper moment to overturn the new designations, did not lose a moment

* Horace Walpole's Reminiscences.

in observing to the King how prejudicial it would be to his affairs to prefer a man in whose own judgment his predecessor was the fittest person to execute the office." She had already given a public proof that with her the late holders of office were not disgraced. On the very day after the accession, when "all the nobility and gentry in town crowded to kiss hands;" when the "common face of a Court was quite reversed," and "there was not a creature in office who had not the most sorrowful and dejected countenance of distress and disappointment," Caroline was the only woman in that servile crowd who took any notice of Lady Walpole—the wife of the Minister, whose "late devotees" kept her with "scornful backs and elbows" from approaching the royal presence; "but no sooner was she descried by her Majesty," writes her son, with natural triumph, "than the Queen cried aloud, 'There, I am sure I see a friend!'" An inferior mind might well have taken that little bit of vengeance on the former Court which had expelled and tabooed herself. But Caroline was either altogether superior to the temptation, or too wise, even in the first moment of triumph, to avail herself of it. All the elaborate machinery by which she ruled was already in operation to keep the tried and trusty public servant who had managed the country for so long, and knew its wants so well, at the head of affairs. She had the penetration to see that here was the friend and defender of whom her family stood in need.

It would be vain to attempt to say that the means by which Caroline procured her will were of the most dignified kind. They were such means as we see continually employed in private life, when a clever and sensible woman is linked (unfortunately, not a very uncommon circumstance) to an ill-tempered, headstrong, and shallow man. They are means to which a pure and elevated mind would find it very hard, even impossible, to stoop; but there can be little doubt that by their partial use many a family has been kept united and prosperous, and many a commonplace personage carried through the world with something like honour and credit, whose affairs would have fallen into hopeless loss and ruin had his wife suffered the natural disgust and impatience of a superior mind to move or be apparent in her. Queen Caroline, perhaps, as her stake was greater than most, carried those means of power to such a perfection as few have been able to reach.

"The Queen, by long studying and long experience of his temper," says Lord Hervey, "knew how to instil her own sentiments, while she affected to receive his Majesty's. She could appear convinced while she was controverting, and obedient while she was ruling; and by this means her dexterity and address made it impossible for anybody to persuade him what was truly his case—that whilst she was seemingly on every occasion giving up her opinion and her will to his, she was always in reality turning his opinion, and binding his will to hers. She managed this deified image as the heathen priests used to do the oracles of old, when, kneeling and prostrate before the altars of a pageant god, they received with the greatest devotion and reverence those directions in public which they had before instilled and regulated in private."

Her labours were unremitting at this grand crisis of fate. And if it be remembered how very ticklish the position was, the immense importance at once to her family and to the country of an agent so judicious and unexcitable can scarcely be overcalculated. A young dispossessed legitimate heir was growing up with all those circumstances in his favour which naturally attend a new life. The old Pretender might have committed himself to many follies—the young Pretender was as yet unstained by any independent act. It might become at any moment the policy of one of the great Continental powers to take up the boy's cause, as indeed they were all well enough inclined to do. He had still a party in England, strong in rank, if not in much else, and a yet stronger in Scotland. The newly-imported German family, which scarcely pretended to love or sympathise with its new subjects, was totally unbeloved by them. Mere policy, and nothing else, an act of national necessity, desperation, so to speak, had brought them over. They had neither traditional loyalty nor personal affection in their favour, nor the powers of mind, or even attraction of manners and appearance, which win popularity. Caroline was as far sensible of this as any individual can be expected to be sensible of the disadvantages of her own immediate family. Though her life abounds in similar situations, there are none more expressive of the mingled tragedy and comedy, the curious junction of the greatest and pettiest interests, than this first scene in her life as queen.

It is ludicrous, yet, if one but thinks what is involved, it is solemn. There is the little King strutting and storming, "losing no opportunity to declare that the Queen never meddled with his business," and strong in the notion of inaugurating a new *régime:* and the faltering unprepared new Minister who stammers, and hesitates, and turns to his rival and predecessor for instruction what to do; and burly Sir Robert standing by, not without a humorous twinkle in his eye, aware that his own interests, as well as those of the country, are at stake, yet not quite able to resist the comic features of the scene; and Caroline behind, cautiously pulling the strings that move her royal puppet, anxiously watching the changes of his temper and his countenance. Not a noble method of managing imperial business; yet without it a deadlock must have ensued, and the business could not have been managed at all.

George had formed a very different idea, as Lord Hervey informs us, of his royal duties.

"His design at his first accession to the throne was certainly, as Boileau says of Louis XIV.,

> 'Seul, sans ministre, à l'exemple des Dieux,
> Faire tout par sa main, et voir tout de ses yeux.'

He intended to have all his ministers in the nature of clerks, not to give advice, but to receive orders; and proposed what by experiment he found impracticable, to receive applications and distribute favours through no principal channels, but to hear from all quarters, and employ indifferently in their several callings those who by their stations would come under the denomination of ministers. But it was very plain from what I have just related from the King's own lips, as well as from

many other circumstances in his present conduct, that the Queen had subverted all his notions and schemes, and fully possessed his Majesty with an opinion that it was absolutely necessary, from the nature of the English government, that he should have but one Minister, and that it was equally necessary, from Sir Robert's superior abilities, that he should be that one. But this work, which she now (1733, five years after the accession) saw complete, had been the work of long time, much trouble, and great contrivance; for though, by a superiority of understanding, thorough knowledge of his temper, and much patience in her own, she could work him by degrees to any point where she had a mind to drive him, yet she was forced to do it often by slow degrees, and with great caution; for as he was infinitely jealous of being governed, he was never to be led but by invisible reins; neither was it ever possible for her to make him adopt her opinion but by instilling her sentiments in such a manner as made him think they rose originally from himself. She always at first gave in to all his notions, though never so extravagant, and made him imagine any change she wrought in them to be an afterthought of his own. To contradict his will directly was always the way to strengthen it; and to labour to convince was to confirm him. Besides all this he was excessively passionate, and his temper upon these occasions was a sort of iron reversed; for the hotter it was, the harder it was to bend, and if ever it was susceptible of any impression or capable of being turned, it was only when it was quite cool."

"The Queen's power was unrivalled and unbounded," Lord Hervey says at another period; and he adds, "How dearly she earned it will be the subject of future consideration in these papers." It is, indeed, the chief subject of his remarkable Memoirs, in which Caroline appears in all the intimacy of private friendship, enhanced as it is by the absolute want of privacy that attends a royal existence. The position, as we have said, is in many respects

undignified. The real rulers of the kingdom, herself and Sir Robert Walpole, have to meet each other in long secret consultations, like two conspirators. The highest designs of State, when they have been decided on between the two, have to be artfully filtered into the intelligence of the King. He has to be prepared, screwed up and down to one pitch or another, tempered to the necessary heat or coolness; they watch him with the most minute and anxious scrutiny—they propitiate him with little flatteries, with compliances and indulgences, which, as from the Queen at least, are at once unseemly and unnatural—they attend upon his humour with a servile obsequiousness that is simply bewildering. His naughty temper, his nasty ways, his wicked little tongue, are endured with steady patience. Worst of all, perhaps, poor Caroline has to submit to his company, seven or eight hours of it every day, which is evidently the greatest infliction she has to bear. The picture is miserable, dreadful, whimsical, absurd, and touching. For at the worst, when all is said, these two who have lived together so long, who have their children round them, who are not of different countries to make the manners of one repulsive to the other—two Germans, bred in the same ideas, in the same small Courts, who have come to this wonderful preferment together—must have, all errors notwithstanding, lived in such a union as few people ever attain to—a union which seems characteristic of the house of Hanover. No

doubt, when it is the weakness of the woman which leans upon the man, the picture is more consistent with the arrangements of society, and more beautiful to behold as a matter of æsthetics. But when a strong, calm, enduring woman, unimpassioned yet tender, backs steadily with all her strength, all her life, the weak, unstable, and uncertain man, who, with all his imperfections, is her husband, it would be hard to refuse a certain admiration at the sight. His sacred Majesty was an intolerable little monster in many respects—yet for more than thirty years they clung to each other, shared each other's good and evil fortunes, were cast into the shade together, and together burst into power; discussed every public matter, every domestic incident, every inclination, wicked or otherwise, in that grand committee of two which is, wherever it is to be found, the great consolation and strength of life. If the King brought little wisdom to his council, he yet brought himself—a malleable and shapeable being. The heart of the spectator melts to him a little as it becomes evident how very shapeable he was. The Royal George was clay in the hands of the potter. He "strutted" out of doors; he strutted even and snubbed his wife when there was only Lord Hervey and some poor tedious German dependant looking on. But he never forsook her, or resisted the inevitable moulding which took place when they were alone. The extent of his "strutting" seems to have been extraordinary. He grew at once

facetious and historical in his certainty of being master. In other reigns, he informed his courtiers, it had been otherwise. Charles I. had been governed by his wife; Charles II. by his mistresses; King William by his men—and Queen Anne by her women—favourites; his own father by anybody who could get at him. Then, "with a significant, satisfied, triumphant air," the ridiculous little monarch turned to his auditors, "And who do they say governs now?" he said, swelling with royal pride and content. One can imagine how my lords bowed, and how the muscles twitched about their courtly mouths. But neither within doors nor without was there any echo of his Majesty's complacency. There are moments in our own time when the newspapers are impertinent, and *Punch* ventures on a joke which is a little less than loyal. But speech was very free in the middle of the eighteenth century.

> "You may strut, dapper George, but 'twill all be in vain;
> We know 'tis Queen Caroline, not you, who reign,"

sang boisterously the popular muse. It was the terror of her life that he should find out that he was ruled; it was the delight of his that he was unquestionably lord and master of all.

Sir Robert Walpole's authority, thus once established, lasted five years longer than the life of his royal mistress. The politics of the time, involved as they are with foreign affairs to an extent which seems strange in these days of non-intervention—though indeed non-intervention had already taken

shape, and was a principle to which Walpole clung with much tenacity—are too elaborate to be here discussed. The greatest of all matters to England at the moment was the steady continuance of things as they were, and settlement of the new dynasty, with at least such additional power as the habit of seeing them there could give, on the throne. The country had no love to give them; but so long as it had no positive offence—so long as it was kept content, and things went on to the moderate satisfaction of the people—every day that passed safely over the heads of the new monarchs was an advantage to them. Nothing is more curious than the account of the relations between the Court, the Cabinet, and the Houses of Parliament, which is incidentally given in Lord Hervey's narrative. Everything that was done in the country was done by Queen Caroline and Sir Robert Walpole, in private committee assembled. The complaisant Cabinet adopted their resolutions, signed their letters, and did whatever it was told to do. The Parliament, if not always so obedient, did its spiriting very gently; and when a majority was not to be had otherwise, there were always means of getting it, according to the method adopted on the Prince of Wales's rebellious demand for more money. That majority cost the King only £900, Lord Hervey tells us; and it is evident that everybody thought it a great bargain. But the country out of doors made itself audible and visible now and then, as in

the commotion about the Excise Bill, and in that marvellous mob-episode, the Porteous Riot in Edinburgh. The one was a constitutional, the other an unconstitutional outbreak; but in both cases the people had their way, and the Court had to put up with the affront. On the whole, there seems to have been some resemblance between the blustering King and his people at this period. They were both given to illegitimate pleasures; they were both very foolish, hot-headed, and obstinate. Both of them would pull up short at a bit of a measure which a little while afterwards they would swallow whole without the least reluctance. Sir Robert managed the nation much as Caroline managed her husband. He gave in, or appeared to give in, to it by times. Then after the many-headed mass had forgotten a little, he would come back to his abandoned measure, and get it over easily. His was light work, however, in comparison with the unceasing diplomacy and weary unending strain which was made on the Queen's strength by her master. She had seven or eight hours of him every day. She had to keep on her mask, and never to forget herself or her object in her most private moments. Such martyrs there are in ordinary life, whom nobody suspects. And there are some scenes in the Queen's history, trivial and miserable and exasperating, which most people have seen reflected in little episodes of domestic history in households much less exalted than those of kings and queens.

There are several other particulars equally noticeable. We do not speak of the general coarseness of talk, though that seems to have been universal; and indeed the fact of its being universal takes to some extent the meaning out of it. It was an odious fashion, but it was a fashion. The sweet Mary Bellenden, whom Horace Walpole describes as a perfect creature, talks in her friendly letters to Lady Suffolk as we presume women of the very lowest class, short of infamy, would be ashamed to talk now—and does it as a fast girl of the present day talks slang, from mere thoughtlessness apparently, and high spirits. We remember once to have walked for five minutes down a street in Glasgow behind a group of merry mill-girls, with bare feet and *coiffure* as elaborate as if each had employed a separate *artiste;* and their talk, which, after an interval of twenty years, still haunts the horrified ear, resembled the choice phrases with which Horace Walpole's "perfect creature" sprinkles her familiar epistles. Yet she was a woman against whom scandal had not a word to say. It would be vain, then, to expect from Queen Caroline and her Court the purity of tone which prevails in our own; nor have we any right to blame individuals for what was at once a fault and fashion of the age. We have no intention or desire to enter into that fossil nastiness. Thank heaven! the *mode* has changed.

But it is curious also to contrast the impartial attitude so strenuously maintained by the Sovereign in

our own day with the complete absorption in politics and the cares of government which distinguishes Queen Caroline, and, in a lesser degree, her husband. It was her vocation—the work of her life. She enters into every detail as if she were a Lord of the Treasury. Probably no Lord of the Treasury nowadays gives himself up so entirely to the work of ruling. Nor was there any public pretence of constitutional indifference. The Ministerial party is called the Court party without disguise; the Opposition are his Majesty's enemies. And when anything goes wrong, an insubordinate Secretary or disappointed Chamberlain does not hesitate to give the Queen a bit of his mind. Fancy Lord Carnarvon or General Peel, when circumstances went against them, rushing into the presence of our liege Lady, and making speeches to her of a dozen pages, to the effect that she is deceived in her trust, that her Prime Minister is a rogue, and that she will repent in the end! Such was the mission of Lord Stair on occasion of the famous Excise Bill, on which Sir Robert Walpole was defeated by the country in one of its wild, and to all appearance unreasonable, epidemics of resistance. The whole transaction is sufficiently interesting to be told in full.

The scheme itself was simple enough. It was an expedient to diminish the land-tax, which in the time of war had been as high as four shillings in the pound, by an excise duty upon tobacco and wine, which, along with the salt duty, was to balance the

subtraction of a shilling in the pound from the tax on land; and Sir Robert, we are told by Lord Hervey, expected nothing but increased popularity from the proposal. Instead of this it set the country in a blaze. "Everybody talked of the scheme as a general excise; they believed that food and raiment, and all the necessaries of life, were to be taxed; that armies of excise officers were to come into every house, and at any time they pleased; that our liberties were at an end, trade going to be ruined, Magna Charta overturned, all property destroyed, the Crown made absolute, and Parliament themselves no longer necessary to be called." To aid this hubbub, a small party of lords, all in office, sent a messenger in the person of Lord Stair to remonstrate with the Queen. He informed her Majesty that her Prime Minister was more universally odious than any minister in any country had ever been; that he was hated by the army, hated by the clergy, hated by the *city of London*, and hated by the Scotch to a man (the speaker himself, and half of the party he represented being Scots lords).

"That he absolutely governs your Majesty, nobody doubts," said this astute and amiable messenger; and he proceeded to inform Caroline that the scheme was so wicked, so dishonest, and so slavish, that his conscience would not permit him to vote for it. The Queen had listened to him calmly up to this point, but here her patience failed. "When Lord Stair talked of his conscience with such so-

lemnity, she cried out, 'Ah, my lord, *ne me parlez point de conscience: vous me faites évanouir!*'" Such was the way in which deputations conducted themselves, and were received, in those days. When her visitor, however, went on to say that the profligacy of mankind could not be so great as that the House of Commons should pass a bill so opposite to the interests of their constituents, and so opposed to their wishes, Caroline answered with the following sharp retort:—

"Do you, my lord," she asks, with a certain fine scorn, "pretend to talk of the opinion of the electors having any influence on the elected? You have made so very free with me in this conference, my lord, that I hope you will think I am entitled to speak my mind with as little reserve to you. . . . I must therefore, once more, ask you, my lord, how you can have the assurance to talk to me of your thinking the sense of constituents, their interest or their instructions, any measure or rule for the conduct of their representatives in Parliament; or if you believe I am so ignorant or so forgetful of all past proceedings in Parliament as not to know that in the only occasion when these considerations should have biassed you, you set them all at nought? Remember the Peerage Bill, my lord. Who then betrayed the interests of their constituents? Who deprived their constituents of all chance of ever taking their turn with those whom they then sent to Parliament? The English lords in passing that bill were only guilty of tyranny, but every Scotch lord was guilty of the last treachery; and whether you were one of the sixteen traitors, your own memory, I believe, will serve to tell you without the assistance of mine."

This stormy interview concluded with the exit of Lord Stair in "a violent passion," exclaiming, "*Madame, vous êtes trompée, et le Roi est trahi!*"

The King was occupied, one does not know how, while this was going on—eating bread and honey,

perhaps—while the Queen was in her parlour with this passionate peer. But he was roused to interest when the kingdom began to heave and give forth volcanic groans. On the night of the debate, "justices of the peace, constables, and civil magistrates, were all astir to preserve the public peace; secret orders were given to the Horse and Foot Guards to be in readiness at a moment's warning." And "the mob came down to Westminster," crowding the lobby and the surrounding precincts, as we have seen it do in our own day. Notwithstanding all this commotion, the Bill was passed by a majority of sixty-one. Lord Hervey had to send word from the House how things were going, to satisfy the anxious couple at the Palace; and when he got back to St James's, "was carried by the King into the Queen's bedchamber, and there kept without dinner (poor Chamberlain!) till near three in the morning, asking him ten thousand questions, relating not only to people's words and actions, but even to their looks."

Notwithstanding the majority, however, the Bill was finally given up, after various other incidents which we cannot enter into. The anxiety of the whole "Court party" seems to have been intense. Sir Robert Walpole offered his resignation, or rather, as it seems, suggested to their Majesties that perhaps it would be proper that he should resign. "The Queen chid him extremely for having so ill an opinion of her, as to think it possible for her to be so mean, so cowardly, and so ungrateful as to accept of such

an offer; and assured him that as long as she lived she would not abandon him. When Sir Robert made the same offer to the King, his Majesty (as the Queen told me) made the most kingly, the most sensible, and the most resolute answer that it was possible for a wise, a just, and a great prince to make to the most able and the most meritorious servant. But whether she dictated the words before he spoke them or embellished them afterwards," says the sceptical Hervey, never very enthusiastic about his royal master, "I know not." She had been "weeping plentifully" when her faithful attendant and chronicler went up to the drawing-room. One wonders if Queens and Ministers, not to speak of Kings, are as much moved at the present day when a favourite measure has to be abandoned. "The King walked about the room in great anger and disorder," and ordered poor Lord Hervey to send bulletins from the House. Sir Robert "stood some time after the House was up leaning against the table, with his hat over his eyes, and some few friends with melancholy countenances round him." The Queen, when she said, "It is over, we must give way," had the tears running down her cheeks. It is strange to hear of so much emotion all about an abortive measure which, in its own essence, was not of fundamental importance, and which came to nothing. Sir Robert was very near paying for it dearly, from the insults and assaults of the mob. To show, however, the latent fire always ready to burst forth which existed in the country, it

may be added that in the rejoicings made at Oxford over the defeat of Ministers, the health of James III. was publicly drunk. This was a very gaseous and harmless sort of treason, as we know now; but it looked dangerous and alarming enough then.

During the ten years of Caroline's reign, her lord made repeated visits to Hanover, during which intervals she was Queen-Regent, and was at liberty to act in her own person without the trouble of influencing him. He wrote to her constantly during these absences—letters of forty or fifty pages each, Lord Hervey says; a long and close journal of all his proceedings, even of such proceedings as were unfit to be reported to any woman's ear, much less to his wife's. It was pretty Fanny's way, and there was apparently nothing to be done but to give in to it. We repeat, a high-spirited and pure-minded woman could not have given in to it; which, perhaps, only means, however, that no one could have done so who had lived into the nineteenth century and thought as we did. But Caroline was of the eighteenth century, and she did not think as we do. A mistress more or less did not matter in these days; it seemed to have been a thing taken for granted. And the Queen was a queen as much as she was a wife. She had come to her natural occupation when she ascended the new yet old throne upon which necessity and Protestantism had placed her race. She was necessary to the country—at least as much as any human creature can be said to be necessary to a world which, when its

best and most powerful rulers are removed, still finds it can get on reasonably well without them. The price of her high position, her unbounded influence, her reign, in short—for reign it was—was her continuance of the unswerving indulgence and support which she had always given to the King. She had borne Lady Suffolk very quietly. Nothing can be more visionary than the instances of trifling spite which she is alleged to have shown to that mild woman. Without doubt her own favourite, Mrs Clayton, could have produced parallel passages had anybody taken the trouble to look them up. She seems, on the contrary, to have been very good to her "good Howard," and remonstrated with her on her leaving Court, bidding her to recollect that she, like her Majesty's self, was no longer young, and that she must learn philosophy, and not resent the failure of her royal lover's attention, of which she had complained—an almost incredible conversation to take place between the man's wife and his "favourite"—yet true. "The Queen was both glad and sorry" (of Lady Suffolk's retirement), says Lord Hervey. "Her pride was glad to have even this ghost of a rival removed; and she was *sorry to have so much more of her husband's time thrown on her hands*, when she had already enough to make her often feel heartily weary of his company." This is the point of view which seems to have struck the Princess Royal, who, with the frankness of the period, has also her word to say about the domestic incident. "I wish with all my

heart," said this young lady, "that he would take somebody else, that mamma might be a little relieved from the *ennui* of seeing him always in her room." Few people, perhaps, would venture upon the same boldness of suggestion; but yet we do not doubt there is something in poor Queen Caroline's dismay at the prospect of having more than her share of her husband's company, which will go to the hearts of many sympathetic women who know what it is. We may here quote a few instances of what the poor lady had to bear.

It was on his second visit to Hanover that George fixed his affections on Madame Walmoden, afterwards created by him Countess of Yarmouth. He had nobody to interfere with him in his nasty little Paradise; no Queen, no Minister to disturb his leisure with their projects, no House of Commons to worry him with doubtful majorities; and he enjoyed himself, it is evident, in his own refined way. He was very reluctant to return out of that Armida's garden to the realities of life in England. His people, such as they were, were fond of him in Hanover; his Ministers were obsequious, and he was free to take his pleasure according to his fancy. When he left that Eden it was under the promise of returning some months later, a promise which he was careful to keep; but he came home possessed of such a demon of ill-temper as made the lives of the unfortunate inhabitants of St James's a burden to them. Nothing English pleased the King. "No English or even French cook

could dress a dinner; no English confectioner set out a dessert; no English player could act; no English coachman could drive, or English jockey ride; no Englishman knew how to come into a room, nor any Englishwoman how to dress herself. Whereas at Hanover all these things were in the utmost perfection." He came into his splendid banishment like an east wind, biting and blighting everything; everything he saw was wrong. The Queen had caused some bad pictures to be removed out of the great drawing-room at Kensington and replaced them with good ones—an arrangement which his Majesty immediately countermanded; he snapped at his Ministers for going into the country "to torment a poor fox that was generally a much better beast than any of them that pursued him;" he behaved to his wife with the coarsest and most invariable ill-temper, and generally made himself disagreeable to everybody.

"One evening among the rest, as soon as Lord Hervey came into the room, the Queen, who was knotting while the King walked backwards and forwards, began jocosely to attack Lord Hervey upon an answer just published to a book of his friend Bishop Hoadley's upon the Sacrament, in which the Bishop was very ill treated; but before she had uttered half what she had a mind to say, the King interrupted her, and told her she always loved talking of such nonsense and things she knew nothing about; adding, that if it were not for such foolish people loving to talk of those things when they were written, the fools who wrote upon them would never think of publishing their nonsense and disturbing the Government with impertinent disputes that nobody of any sense ever troubled himself about. The Queen bowed, and said, 'Sir, I only did it to let Lord Hervey know that his friend's book had not met with that general

approbation he had intended.' 'A pretty fellow for a friend!' said the King, turning to Lord Hervey. 'Pray what is it that charms you in him? His pretty limping gait (and then the King acted the Bishop's lameness) or his nasty stinking breath —phaugh! or his silly laugh when he grins in your face for nothing, and shows his nasty rotten teeth?'—(and so on for a couple of pages.) . . .

"Lord Hervey, in order to turn the conversation, told the King that he had that day been with a bishop of a very different stamp, . . . who had carried us to Westminster Abbey to show us a pair of old brass gates to Henry VII.'s Chapel. . . . Whilst Lord Hervey was going on with a particular detail and encomium on these gates—the Queen asking many questions about them, and seeming extremely pleased with the description—the King stopped the conversation short by saying, 'My lord, you are always putting some of these fine things in the Queen's head, and then I am to be plagued with a hundred plans and workmen.' Then turning to the Queen, he said, 'I suppose I shall see a pair of these gates to Merlin's Cave to complete your nonsense there' (this Merlin's Cave was a little building so christened which the Queen had lately finished at Richmond). . . . '*Apropos*,' said the Queen, 'I hear the *Craftsman** has abused Merlin's Cave.' 'I am very glad of it,' interrupted the King; 'you deserve to be abused for such childish silly stuff, and it is the first time I ever knew the scoundrel to be in the right.'

"This the Queen swallowed too, and began to talk on something else, till the conversation, I know not by what transition, fell on the ridiculous expense it was to people, by the money given to servants, to go and stay two or three days with their acquaintance in the country; upon which the Queen said she had found it a pretty large expense this summer, to visit her friends even in town. 'That is your own fault,' said the King; 'for my father, when he went to people's houses in town, never was fool enough to be giving away his money.' The Queen pleaded for her excuse that she had only done what Lord

* The Opposition newspaper, in which King, Queen, and Minister were very roughly handled.

Grantham had told her she was to do; to which his Majesty replied that my Lord Grantham was a pretty director; that she was always asking some fool or other what she was to do; and that none but a fool would ask another fool's advice. The Queen then appealed to Lord Hervey, whether it was not now as customary to give money in town as in country. *He knew it was not, but said it was.* He added, too, that to be sure, were it not so for particulars (private persons), it would certainly be expected from her Majesty. To which the King said, 'Then she may stay at home as I do. You do not see me running into every puppy's house to see his new chairs and stools; nor is it for you,' said he, addressing himself to the Queen, 'to be running your nose everywhere, and trotting about the town to every fellow that will give you some bread and butter, like an old girl that loves to go abroad, no matter where, or whether it be proper or no.' The Queen coloured and knotted a good deal faster during this speech than she had done before, whilst the tears came into her eyes, but she said not one word. Lord Hervey (who cared not whether he provoked the King's wrath himself or not, provided he could have the merit to the Queen of diverting his Majesty's ill-humour from her) said to the King, that as the Queen loved pictures, there was no way of seeing a collection but by going to people's houses. 'And what matter whether she saw a collection or not?' replied the King. 'The matter, sir, is that she satisfies her own curiosity, and obliges the people whose houses she honours with her presence.' 'Supposing,' said the King, 'she had a curiosity to see a tavern, would it be fit for her to satisfy it? and yet the innkeeper would be very glad to see her.' 'If the innkeepers,' replied Lord Hervey, 'were used to be well received by her Majesty in her palace, I should think the Queen's seeing them at their own houses would give no additional scandal.' The King then, instead of answering Lord Hervey, turned to the Queen, and with a good deal of vehemence, poured out an unintelligible torrent of German, to which the Queen made not one word of reply, but knotted on till she tangled her thread, then snuffed the candles that stood on the table before her, and snuffed one of them out; upon which the King, in English, began a new

dissertation on her Majesty, and took her awkwardness for his text."

Perhaps the reader may some time in his life have assisted at a similar scene. One can imagine the furious feeble little man strutting and raging about the room, twisting every new subject, painfully started in the hope of diverting his ill-humour, into a new channel for its outlet. And the Queen, at her table by the light of her candles, anxiously talkative at first, then silent, knotting ever faster and faster, with trembling hands and tangling thread; and the courtier standing by grieved for her, yet half amused in his own person, ready to tell any fib, or make any diversion of the master's wrath upon his own head —knowing it was not, but saying it was, and telling us so with a beautiful candour. It was for want of Herrenhausen and his German enchantress that the wicked little monarch was so cross. On other occasions he would take up one of his wife's candles as she knotted, and show Lord Hervey the pictures of his Dutch delights, which with characteristic good taste he had had painted and hung in Caroline's sitting-room, dwelling upon the jovial interest which was the subject of each with mingled enthusiasm and regret. He had vowed to go back to his love in May, and all the winter was spent in those sweet recollections and fits of temper. Nor was this all the poor Queen had to bear. Her Minister assured her coarsely and calmly that nothing was more natural; that she was herself old and past the age of pleasing;

and that, in fact, there was nothing else to be looked for. He had the incredible audacity to propose to her, at the same time, that she should send for a certain Lady Tankerville, "a handsome, good-natured, simple woman," to make a balance on the side of England to the attractions at Hanover. We are not told that Lady Tankerville, whose recommendation was that she would be "a safe fool," had done anything to warrant the Minister's selection of her. Caroline laughed, Sir Robert said, "and took the proposal extremely well." But her laugh, Lord Hervey wisely remarks, was no sign of her satisfaction with so presumptuous and injurious an address.

Lord Hervey throughout the whole seems to have been her chief support and consolation. He was with her constantly, spent the mornings with her, brought her all the news of the town, the Parliament, and what people were saying. When the Court went hunting, which was a very common ceremony, Lord Hervey, not the kind of man to care for that simple excitement, rode on a hunter she had given him by the side of the Queen's chaise; and while the noisy crowd flew past them the two discussed every movement in the country—every project of State,—every measure projected or proposed for the rule of England, as well as the involved and tangled web of wars and negotiations abroad. There is an amusing little sketch, included in the Memoirs, written by Lord Hervey for the amusement of his royal mistress, and setting forth, under a dramatic form, the manner in

which the news of his death would be received by the Court, which gives, perhaps, a more distinct view of that curious royal interior than anything else which has come to our hands.

THE DEATH OF LORD HERVEY; OR, A MORNING AT COURT.

A DRAMA.

ACT I.

Scene.—The Queen's Gallery. The time, nine in the morning.

(*Enter* the QUEEN, PRINCESS EMILY, PRINCESS CAROLINE, *followed by* LORD LIFFORD (a Frenchman) *and* MRS PURCEL.)

QUEEN.—*Mon Dieu, quelle chaleur! en vérité on étouffe.* Pray, open a little these windows.

LORD LIFFORD.—Has-a your Majesty hear-a de news?

QUEEN.—What news, my dear lord?

LORD L.—Dat my Lord Hervey, as he was coming last night to *tone*, was rob and murdered by highwaymen, and tron in a ditch.

P. CAROLINE.—*Eh, grand Dieu!*

QUEEN (*striking her hand upon her knee*).—*Comment, est il veritablement mort?* Purcel, my angel, shall I not have a little breakfast?

MRS PURCEL.—What would your Majesty please to have?

QUEEN.—A little chocolate, my soul, if you give me leave; and a little sour cream and some fruit.

(*Exit* MRS PURCEL.)

QUEEN (*to Lord Lifford*).—*Eh bien! my Lord Lifford, dites nous un peu comment cela est arrivé.* I cannot imagine what he had to do to be putting his nose there.

LORD L.—*Madame, on sçait quelque chose de cela de Mon. Maran qui d'abord qu'il a vu de voleurs s'est enfui et venu à grand galoppe à Londres,* and after dat a waggoner take up de body and put it in his cart.

QUEEN (*to Princess Emily*).—Are you not ashamed, Amalie, to laugh?

P. EMILY.—I only laughed at the cart, mamma.

QUEEN.—Ah! that is a very *fade plaisanterie.*

P. EMILY.—But if I may say it, mamma, I am not very sorry.

QUEEN.—*Fi donc! Eh bien*, my Lord Lifford! My God, where is this chocolate, Purcel?

(*Re-enter* MRS PURCEL, *with the chocolate and fruit.*)

QUEEN (*to Mrs Purcel*).—Well, I am sure Purcel now is very sorry for my Lord Hervey: have you heard it?

MRS P.—Yes, madam; and I am always sorry when your Majesty loses anything that entertains you.

QUEEN.—Look you there, now, Amalie; I swear now Purcel is a thousand times better as you.

P. EMILY.—I did not say I was not sorry for mamma; but I am not sorry for him.

QUEEN.—And why not?

P. EMILY.—What, for that creature?

P. CAROLINE.—I cannot imagine why one should not be sorry for him: I think it very *dure* not to be sorry for him. I own he used to laugh malapropos sometimes, but he was mightily mended; and for people that were civil to him, he was always ready to do anything to oblige them; and for my part I am sorry, I assure.

P. EMILY.—Mamma, Caroline is *duchtich:* for my part, I cannot *paroître.*

QUEEN.—Ah, ah! You can *paroître* and be *duchtich* very well sometimes: but this is no *paroître;* and I think you are very great brutes. I swear now he was very good, poor my Lord Hervey; and with people's lives that is no jest. My dear Purcel, this is the nastiest fruit I have ever tasted; is there none of the Duke of Newcastle's? or that old fool Johnstone's? *Il était bien joli quelquefois*, my Lord Hervey; was he not, Lifford?

LORD L. (*taking snuff*).—Ees, ended he vas ver pretty company sometimes.

(P. EMILY *shrugs her shoulders and laughs again.*)

QUEEN (*to Princess Emily*).—If you did not think him com-

pany, I am sorry for your taste. (*To Princess Caroline*) My God, Caroline, you will twist off the thumbs of your glove! *Mais, my Lord Lifford, qui vous a conté tout ça des voleurs, du ditch, et des waggoners?*

LORD L.—I have hear it at St James's, et tout le monde en parle.

QUEEN (*to Mrs Purcel*).—Have you sent, Purcel, to Vickers about my clothes?

MRS P.—He is here, if your Majesty pleases to see the stuffs.

QUEEN.—No, my angel, I must write now. Adieu, adieu, my Lord Lifford!

ACT II.

Scene.—The Queen's dressing-room. The Queen is discovered at her toilet cleaning her teeth; Mrs Purcel dressing her Majesty's head. The Princesses, Lady Burlington and Lady Pembroke, Ladies of the Bedchamber, and Lady Sundon, Woman of the Bedchamber, standing round. Morning prayers saying in the next room.

1ST PARSON (*behind the scenes*).—*From pride, vainglory, and hypocrisy, from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness—*

2D PARSON.—*Good Lord, deliver us!* *

QUEEN.—I pray, my good Lady Sundon, shut a little that door; those creatures pray so loud one cannot hear one's self speak. (*Lady Sundon goes to shut the door.*) So, so, not quite so much; leave it enough open for those parsons to think we may hear, and enough shut that we may not hear quite so much. (*To Lady Burlington*) What do you say, Lady Burlington, to poor Lord Hervey's death? I am sure you are very sorry.

LADY P. (*sighing and lifting up her eyes*).—I swear it is a terrible thing.

LADY B.—I am just as sorry as I believe he would have been for me.

* It was the pious custom of the period to read prayers in the anteroom, while the Queen dressed—thus saving at once time and appearances.

QUEEN.—How sorry is that, my good Lady Burlington?

LADY B.—Not so sorry as not to admit of consolation.

QUEEN.—I am sure you have not forgiven him his jokes upon Chiswick.

. . . . . .

(*Enter* LORD GRANTHAM.)

. . . . . .

QUEEN.— . . . But what news do you bring us, my Lord Grantham?

LORD G.—Your Majesty has hear de news of poor my Lord Hervey?

QUEEN.—Ah, *mon cher* my lord, *c'est une viellerie: il y a cent ans qu'on le sçait.*

LORD G.—I have just been talking of him to Sir Robert. Sir Robert is prodigiously concerned; he has seen Monsieur —how you call?—*Marant.*

QUEEN.—*Maran vous voudrez dire.* I pray, my good child, take away all these things, and let Sir Robert come in.

(LORD GRANTHAM *brings in* SIR ROBERT WALPOLE, *and all but* SIR ROBERT *and the* QUEEN *go out.*)

QUEEN.—Come, come, my good Sir Robert, sit down. Well, how go matters?

SIR R.—Everything very well, madam—pure and well. I have just had intelligence out of the city; all is very quiet there. . . . But what news from Hanover, madam?

QUEEN.—There is a letter of five-and-forty pages from the King; I have not time now, but there are some things in it that I must talk to you about.

SIR R.—I have had a long letter, too, from Horace.

QUEEN.—Oh, mon Dieu! not about his silly ladder-story again. My good Sir Robert, I am so tired and so sick of all that nonsense that I cannot bear to talk or think of it any more. Apropos poor my Lord Hervey, I swear I could cry!

SIR R.—Your Majesty knows I had a great partiality for him; and really, madam, whatever faults he might have, there was a great deal of good stuff in him. I shall want him, and your Majesty shall miss him.

QUEEN.—Oh! so I will. . . . Adieu, my good Sir

Robert, I believe it is late. I must go a moment into the drawing-room; do you know who is there?

SIR R.—I saw the Duke of Argyle, madam.

QUEEN.—Oh, mon Dieu! I am so weary of that *Felt-Marshal* and his tottering head and his silly stories about the bishops, that I could cry whenever I am obliged to entertain him. And who is there more?

SIR R.—There is my Lord President, madam.

QUEEN.—Oh, that's very well. I shall talk to him about his fruit, and some silly council at the Cock-pit, and the Plantations; my Lord President loves the Plantations. . . . But who is there beside? Adieu, adieu, my good Sir Robert; I must go, though you are to-day excellent conversation.

ACT III.

Scene changes to great drawing-room. All the courtiers ranged in a circle.

(*Enter the* QUEEN, *led by* LORD GRANTHAM, *followed by the Princesses and all her train.* QUEEN *curtsies very slightly: Drawing-room bows and curtsies very low.*)

QUEEN (*to the Duke of Argyle*).—Where have been, my Lord? One has not had the pleasure to see you a great while, and one always misses you. . . .

DUKE OF A.—I have been in Oxfordshire, madam, and so long that I was asking my father, Lord Selkirk, how to behave. I know nobody that knows the ways of a Court so well, or that has known them so long.

LORD SELKIRK.—By God! my lord, I know nobody knows them better than the Duke of Argyle.

DUKE OF A.—All I know, father, is as your pupil; but I told you I was grown a country gentleman.

LORD S.—You often tell me things I do not believe.

QUEEN (*laughing*).—Ha! ha! ha! you are always so good together, and my Lord Selkirk is always so lively. (*Turning to Lord President*) I think, my lord, you are a little of a country gentleman too—you love Chiswick mightily; you have very good fruit there, and are very curious in it; you have very good plums.

LORD PRESIDENT.—I like a plum, madam, mightily; it is a very pretty fruit.

QUEEN.—The greengage, I think, is very good.

LORD PRES.—There are three of that sort, madam; there is the true greengage, and there is the Drap d'Or, that has yellow spots; and there is the Reine Claude, that has red spots.

QUEEN.—Ah, ah! One sees you are very curious, and that you understand these things perfectly well. 'Upon my word, I did not know you was so deep in these things. You know the plums as Solomon did the plants, from the cedar to the hyssop.

QUEEN (*to 1st Court Lady*).—I believe you found it very dusty?

1ST COURT LADY.—Very dusty, madam.

QUEEN (*to 2d Court Lady*).—Do you go soon into the country, madam?

2D COURT LADY.—Very soon, madam.

QUEEN (*to 3d Court Lady*).—The town is very empty, I believe, madam?

3D COURT LADY.—Very empty, madam.

QUEEN (*to 4th Court Lady*).—I hope all your family is very well, madam?

4TH COURT LADY.—Very well, madam.

QUEEN (*to 5th Court Lady*).—We have had the finest summer for walking in the world.

5TH COURT LADY.—Very fine, madam.

. . . . . .

(*Enter* LORD GRANTHAM, *in a hurry.*)

LORD GRANTHAM.—Ah, dere is my Lord Hervey in your Majesty gallery; he is in de frock and de bob, or he should have come in.

QUEEN.—Mon Dieu! my Lord Grantham, you are mad!

LORD G.—He is dere, all so live as he was; and has play de trick to see as we should all say.

QUEEN.—Then *he* is mad. *Allons voir qu'est ce que c'est que tout ceci.*

(*Exeunt omnes.*)

There is also a short conversation in this clever

jeu d'esprit between the Queen and Walpole, which throws a gleam of light upon the difficulties Caroline had to contend with in learning to comprehend English laws and liberties. Some riots had arisen in London, beginning with a purely local practical remonstrance made by the weavers of Spitalfields against the introduction of certain competitors—"Irishmen working at a lower rate than the English journeyman." It "began with railing against Irishmen," says Lord Hervey, "but came in twenty-four hours to cursing of Germans, reviling the King and Queen, and huzzaing for James III." The troops were sent to assist the civil magistrate in quelling this tumult; but the magistrate who read the proclamation to disperse the rioters made a great blunder by seizing some persons after he had read the proclamation before the hour was expired which the Act allows to the rioters to disperse. "We must hang some of these villains," says the Queen, with royal brevity; to which Walpole answers as follows, not without a certain enjoyment, one can imagine, in her bewilderment:—

We will if we can, madam. I had my Lord Chancellor and my Lord Hardwicke with me this morning, and I told them the circumstances of the fellows we had taken.

QUEEN.—I must do my Lord Chancellor and my Lord Hardwicke justice. They have behaved both exceeding well; exceeding well, upon my word. I am sure they will hang these rogues.

SIR R.—I told my Lord Chancellor that these fellows that the soldiers had seized were some of the most clamorous and

most audacious, that they were holloaing in a most tumultuous manner at the head of the mob, and crying "Come on, come on!" and all that kind of stuff.

QUEEN.—And what did he say? I am sure he was very zealous. He is the best man in the world.

SIR R.—Madam, after hearing my story out he paused some time, and seemed to decline giving any opinion at all; at last he asked, and very significantly, whether the hour given by the Riot Act for the dispersing of the mob was expired before the men we proposed trying were taken.

QUEEN.—Mon Dieu! that is always those silly lawyers' way, as if the soldiers were to go against people in rebellion with watches in their pockets, or to be asking what is o'clock when they should be serving their Prince. And what said my Lord Hardwicke?

SIR R.—He said, too, madam, that it was impossible to condemn these fellows upon the Riot Act unless the hour was expired.

QUEEN.—Ah, mon Dieu! they are all so *ennuyant* with their silly forms and their silly Acts. But what did he say about pulling down and disfacing—how do you call it?—the houses?

SIR R.—He said on that too, madam, that unless it could be proved that the men we have taken assisted in defacing the houses, that their being in company with those that did was not capital; for though in murder all present are deemed principals, yet in this law none were deemed criminal but those who were proved accessory.

QUEEN.—There is your fine English liberty! The *canaille* may come and pull one by the nose, and unless one can prove which finger touched one's nose, one has but to put a plaster to one's nose, and wait to punish them till they pull it again; and then, maybe, they shall pull one's eyes out of one's head too.

SIR R.—I am afraid, madam, there are inconveniences and imperfections attending all systems of government, and these are ours; but we will see what's to be done, and if they are to be come at they shan't escape.

It is evident, however, that by times Caroline really understood and appreciated the real blessings of English freedom; though it is scarcely to be expected that a woman brought up in a despotic little German Court, and brought up to reign, should have so entirely cast away prejudice and prepossession as to receive it, with its unquestionable imperfections, as the ideal government. Here is a whimsical piece of commendation, extracted from her in the midst of her royal discontents.

"I have heard her," says Lord Hervey, "at different times speak with great indignation against the assertors of the people's rights; have heard her call the King, not without some despite, the humble servant of Parliament—the pensioner of his people—a puppet of sovereignty that was forced to go to them for every shilling he wanted, that was obliged to court them that were always abusing him, and could do nothing of himself. . . . At other times she was more on her guard. I have heard her say, she wondered how the English could imagine that any sensible prince would take away their liberty if he could. 'Mon Dieu!' she cried, 'what a figure would this poor island make in Europe if it were not for its government! It is its excellent free government that makes all its inhabitants industrious, as they know that what they get nobody can take from them; it is its free government, too, that makes foreigners send their money thither, because they know it is secure, and that the prince cannot touch it: and since it is its freedom to which this kingdom owes everything that makes it great, what prince who had his senses, and knew that his own greatness depended on the greatness of the country over which he reigned, would wish to take away what made both him and them considerable? I had as lief,' she added, 'be Elector of Hanover as King of England if the government was the same. *Quel diable*, that had anything else would take you at all, or think you worth having, if you

had not your liberties? Your island might be a very pretty thing in that case for Bridgeman and Kent to cut out into gardens; but for the figure it would make in Europe it would be of no more consequence here in the West than Madagascar in the East; and for this reason, as impudent and as insolent as you all are with your troublesome liberty, your princes, if they are sensible, will rather bear with your impertinencies than cure them—a way that would lessen their influence in Europe full as much as it would increase their power at home.'"

Her education and early ways of thinking made it also very difficult for the Queen to sympathise in the insular policy which, in Sir Robert Walpole's hands, had already come into being. She was not convinced that it was for the interest of England to stand apart and take no share in the wars of the Continent—an opinion in which perhaps by this time many of us are again beginning to join. In respect to this a curious little circumstance is related to us, which proves oddly enough at once the Queen's faithfulness to her political adviser, even when she did not agree with him, and the powerful nature of her agency. "What is very surprising, yet what I know to be true," says Lord Hervey, referring to this question of non-intervention in the quarrels of the Continental nations—"the arguments of Sir Robert Walpole, conveyed through the Queen to the King, so wrought upon him that they quite changed the colour of his Majesty's sentiments, though they did not tinge the channel through which they flowed"—a singular instance, surely, of candid dealing, and that rarest of all forms of truthfulness, the perfectly honest transmission by

one mind of the arguments of another. Partly in spite of his royal clients, partly with their consent, Sir Robert kept the peace, and achieved the position of peacemaker and final umpire for England, which had been the height of his hopes. His arbitration, it is true, was not for the moment successful, but that was a secondary matter. England and *Holland* were the maritime powers which literally, as well as figuratively, lay on their oars, and waited for the moment to propose terms of peace, which should bring France and Spain and the Holy Empire, and poor Italy, always dismembered and bleeding, once more to amicable terms. Curious junction! strange change! —though indeed there may be doubts whether England, shut up in her insularity, is not almost as little likely now to hold the balance straight in a distracted world, or to act as umpire in an imperial quarrel, as Holland itself.

We have left untouched one of the very worst points in Caroline's life, her supposed hatred of, and certain estrangement from, her eldest son. She had seven children; and to all the others it is evident that she was a tender and judicious mother. But she was not the kind of woman with whom love is blind. There is not one trace of wilful unkindness to Prince Frederick throughout the close narrative of her life which we have been following. Though he conducted himself on every occasion with the most insolent disregard of his parents' wishes, and though it is evident that Caroline's heart was alienated from him, and that the

weak and treacherous young profligate had forfeited every claim upon her affection, it is also clear that she treated him throughout with a great deal of the same almost unearthly tolerance which she showed to his father. Affairs came to an actual breach between them only after two acts of his which left no alternative possible between peace and war,—his application to Parliament for an increase of the income which came to him through his father's hands, and the unpardonable insult offered to both his parents on the occasion of the birth of his first child.

This inconceivable piece of folly, with all its revolting details, was enough to alienate and disgust the most patient of mothers. The Royal family and their attendants were at Hampton Court enjoying such country pleasures as were possible to them, "hunting twice a-week," no doubt, as usual, and spending their evenings over ombre, commerce, and quadrille, as was their custom. On one of these quiet, not to say dull, evenings, while the Royal party sat tranquil over their cards, the poor little Princess of Wales—a young submissive creature, with no will of her own—was dragged out of the palace by her husband and carried off to London, while actually suffering from the acutest of human pangs. Her child was born about an hour after her arrival. When an express came from St James's in the middle of the night to intimate this unlooked-for birth, Caroline, confounded, called for her "night-

gown" and her coach, and set off at half-past two in the morning to see into the incomprehensible affair. But neither at that exciting moment nor at any previous period does she seem to have either done or said anything unmotherly or unkind. On her second visit, her son and her son's wife, and all the parasites surrounding them, gave her to perceive that she was unwelcome; and after that, for the first time it is recorded that the Queen, following the example of her husband, who for years had never exchanged a word with his undutiful son, ceased to speak to him when they met on public occasions, or even when they dined together in public. There is nothing revolting, nothing unnatural in her behaviour. She was the medium of communication, such communication as there could be, between the King and the Prince, even after this supreme affront. But it is utterly impossible to conceive that even the affection of a mother could sustain such a stroke unmoved. Mothers can bear much — but it is the foolish youth, the prodigal, the young creature led astray, the child who still may return, and between whom and herself no chasm of natural separation has been made, for whom and from whom a woman endures everything. When the son is a mature man, with separate connections, separate interests, a standing in the world utterly distinct from hers, it is not in nature that the mother should continue as blind to his faults and as infatuated in his favour as in the days of his youth. Caroline's son had placed him-

self at the head of a faction against her; he had repudiated her influence, and set her authority, her affection, herself, at nought; he was her political enemy, building his own hopes of success on the overthrow of hers. Under such changed relations, the maternal tie cannot but undergo some corresponding change.

During these later years of her life, the Queen and her favourite and affectionate child, Caroline, talk much together, with tears and indignation, of the unmannerly and unmanly lout. There is nobody who approves of him, even among his own friends. The Princess Royal Anne marries, with a kind of fierce determination, the unlovely Prince of Orange, in order that she may not be left in her brother's power. The family is of one mind on the subject. And when, on his return from Germany, King George is supposed to have been shipwrecked and lost at sea, the anxiety of the Queen as to her son's treatment of her shows how entirely all faith in him either as son or man has left her. But yet Caroline makes no reprisals, nor even reproaches. She treats with a certain contemptuous kindness his poor little obedient wife, believing her entirely under his sway. She bids God bless the "little rat of a girl" who was painfully brought into a disagreeable world after the flight above recorded. There is nothing in her conduct to the rebel household which the spectator even at this long distance can find fault with. She is not an all-believing, all-hoping, all-enduring mother.

Such a *rôle* was impossible to her. But even in the midst of her revolted affection, her indignation and displeasure, and inevitable contempt, she is always considerate and tolerant—never harsh or cruel.

In the year 1737 the quarrel came to a public climax, when the dispute between the Prince of Wales and the King in the question of his income was brought before Parliament. There seems little doubt that, so far as simple justice went, he had right on his side. In the immense Civil List granted to the King, £100,000 had been tacitly allotted to the Prince as his share: it is true that no express stipulation had been made, but there appears no doubt that such was the understanding. And George II., while Prince of Wales, had himself enjoyed a similar income. He had, however, kept his son on an uncertain allowance—giving him £30,000 before his marriage, and £50,000 after it. The Prince's desire to get possession of the full income intended for him was not, certainly, an unnatural one, though, in times so ticklish, the attempt to extort it by Parliamentary interference, to humiliate the King, and force him into action contrary at once to his pride and his wishes, was as unwise as can be well conceived. It raised an extraordinary commotion in the agitated Court. "The King took the first notice of this business with more temper and calmness than anybody expected he would," says Hervey; "and the Queen, from the beginning of the affair to the end of it, was in much greater agitation and anxiety than I ever saw her on

any other occasion." She had borne the riots, the opposition, and threats of rebellion steadily; she had borne her husband's amazing sins and confessions with self-command and true patience; but when the son, to whom she is said to have been so harsh a mother, thus ranged himself in hostile array against her, Caroline's strength gave way.

"Her concern was so great that more tears flowed on this occasion than I ever saw her shed on all other occasions put together. She said she had suffered a great deal from many disagreeable circumstances this last year: the King's staying abroad; the manner in which his stay had been received and talked of here; her daughter the Princess Royal's danger in lying-in; and the King's danger at sea: but that her grief and apprehension at present surpassed everything she had ever felt before; that she looked on her family from this moment as distracted with divisions of which she could see or hope no end—divisions which would give the common enemies to her family such advantages as might one time or other enable them to get the better of it: and though she had spirits and resolution to struggle with most misfortunes and difficulties, this last, she owned, got the better of her—that it was too much for her to bear; that it not only got the better of her spirits and resolution, but of her appetite and rest, as she could neither eat nor sleep; and that she really feared it would kill her."

Poor Queen! this in her despondency no doubt seemed as if it would be the end of all; all her struggles to secure her family upon that tottering unsteady throne, all her heroic self-control, her humiliations, her tedious and lingering labour, the thousand hard endeavours to which she bent her spirit. She had supported the father's uncertain steps, and turned him, unwilling but submissive, at such cost

to herself as no one but herself could reckon, into the safe way. And her struggle was all to be made of no avail by the stubborn folly of her son. She had never been seen so sad. He had not at any time been her best-beloved, and for years she had been alienated from him; but still it was for him and his children she had toiled so hardly. And here was to be an end of it all. Caroline was not alone in thinking so. The Prince had moved heaven and earth to get a majority, and everybody believed he had secured it. The day before the debate was to come on, Sir Robert Walpole managed to move the King and Queen to send a proposal for a compromise, offering that the £50,000 should be settled on the Prince without possibility of withdrawal, and that a jointure of £50,000 should be given to the Princess. The proposal was rejected, not without additional stings to Caroline, and the debate came on accordingly. It does not seem, notwithstanding the excitement that preceded it, to have been a remarkable debate, and the Prince, contrary to all expectations, lost by a majority of thirty. "Most people," says Lord Hervey, calmly, "thought it (the majority) cost a great deal of money; but Sir Robert Walpole and the Queen both told me separately that it cost the King but £900—£500 to one man and £400 to another." In short, it was an unprecedented bargain. At a later period Sir Robert indignantly bade his master reflect how cheap it had been. "£900 was all this great question cost him." When victories

were going at such a ruinous sacrifice, how could a King have the audacity to complain?

This was the last year of Caroline's life; it was distracted and embittered by ceaseless re-openings of the quarrel with her son, carried on on his part by a succession of hypocritical letters of apology, in which his utter ignorance of any intention to offend is repeated with sickening plausibility. The Queen on her side was no doubt driven to use language which sounds both harsh and coarse to our ears, though it was the usual style of speech in those days. She wishes with angry tears that Lady Bristol, Lord Hervey's mother, a violent and foolish woman, could but have the Prince, whose friend she was, for her son, and leave to poor Caroline the man whose almost filial duty was her own chief comfort. This bitter quarrel, however, in the course of which their own early history was raked up, seems to have brought the Queen and King together. There is not a word of Hanover or its goddess as the autumn falls. No public affairs seem to have been in hand of importance enough to distract to other things the painful and exaggerated feeling which a household engaged in a family struggle always fixes upon that point. A few *tracasseries*, and nothing more — questions whether Sir Robert Walpole is as much in favour as before, and if the Duke of Newcastle is to be kept in office—flit like shadows across the scene which is beginning to be darkened by a more awful shadow. Caroline was not old. She was but fifty-two, scarcely

arrived at the boundary of middle age; but her course was very nearly over. No doubt the pangs of that hard year had told upon her; and for ten years her life had been spent in a mixture of great and little cares which were enough to have worn out any constitution. But it was not the custom of the house of Hanover to be ill or take care of health. She had taken no care of hers. Horace Walpole tells us, though he does not give his authority, that in her determination "never to refuse a desire of the King's," she had risked her very existence in the wildest way. In order to be able to walk, "more than once, when she had the gout in her foot, she dipped her whole leg in cold water, to be able to attend him," he says. And besides all these imprudences, she had a serious disease, a rupture, which she concealed jealously, giving her biographers the trouble to make many wondering excuses for her on the score that she would not make herself disagreeable to the King. The King, however, was the only, or almost the only, person in her painful secret; and no doubt the real reason was, a certain proud and *farouche* modesty in all personal matters, which was very common among women of former generations, however plain-spoken or even light-minded they might be. She was taken ill one November day, but got up, and "saw the company as usual." Making some half-playful half-plaintive grumbles to Lord Hervey, as she passed him, she went, as was her wont, from one to another, and talked and did her painful duty.

"Coming back again to Lord Hervey, she said, 'I am not able to entertain people.' 'Would to God,' replied Lord Hervey, 'the King would have done talking of the Dragon of Wantley and release you!'" (This was a new silly farce which everybody at this time went to see.) "At last the King went away, telling the Queen, as he went by, that she had overlooked the Duchess of Norfolk. The Queen made her excuse for having done so to the Duchess of Norfolk, the last person she ever spoke to in public, and then retired, going immediately to bed, where she grew worse every moment."

Thus began the awful story of a deathbed so extraordinary in some points that it seems almost an unnecessary undertaking to tell it over again. Nobody can have glanced at it in the barest record and ever forget the scene. Caroline in harness to the last, after her excuse to the overlooked Duchess, lay for eleven days fighting with death, undaunted and resolute as ever. The only thing that seems to have discomposed her was the revelation of her secret, and the consequent measures that were taken. She turned her face to the wall and shed tears when she could no longer conceal it—the only tears she shed for herself. But she did not hesitate to give herself over to the painful and useless operations with which doctors of every age and degree of enlightenment torture people who are past help. She knew it was of no use. She would look at the Princesses and shake her head, when the King told her how much better she was. When the hour of her torture came, she turned wistfully to ask him if he approved what the surgeons proposed to do; and on receiving his assurance that it was thought necessary, submitted with that resolu-

tion which had never failed her. Her two daughters were by her bedside night and day;—the poor tender Caroline, a little helpless and hysterical; the Princess Amelia, useful but somewhat hard in her kindness. As for the King, he was heartbroken, but he was himself. He could not leave her in peace at that last moment. By way of watching over her, "he lay on the Queen's bed all night in his night-gown, where he could not sleep, nor she turn about easily." He went out and in continually, telling everybody, with tears, of her great qualities. But he could not restrain the old habit of scolding when he was by her side. "How the devil should you sleep when you will never lie still a moment!" he cried, with an impatience which those who have watched by deathbeds will at least understand. "You want to rest, and the doctors tell you nothing can do you so much good, and yet you always move about. Nobody can sleep in that manner, and that is always your way; you never take the proper method to get what you want, and then you wonder you have it not." When her weary eyes, weary of watching the troubled comings and goings about her, fixed upon one spot, the alarmed, excited, hasty spectator cried out, "with a loud and quick voice." "Mon Dieu! qu'est ce que vous regardez? Comment peut-on fixer ces yeux comme ça?" he cried. He tortured her to eat, as many a healthful watcher does with cruel kindness. "How is it possible you should not know whether you like a thing or not?" he said. He was half-crazed with sorrow

and love, and a kind of panic. And he was garrulous, and talked without intermission of her and of himself, with a vague historical sense that their united life had come to an end.

When the Queen had been given over, and was no longer teased with false hopes, she gave her children her last advice and blessing. The eldest son, the Esau, who had sold his birthright, was not there. He was at his own house in town, flattering himself that "*we shall soon have good news; she cannot hold out much longer.*" Nor was Anne, the Princess Royal, at her mother's bedside. But she had her boy, William—he whom in this solemn domestic scene one grudges to think of as Cumberland—and her younger daughters. She enjoined her son to stand by the King, but never to do anything against his brother. She committed to her daughter, Caroline, the charge of her two little girls, Mary and Louisa. "Poor Caroline! it is a fine legacy I leave you," she said. She was the one calm and tearless amid her weeping family. Then she turned to the King. It is here that the scene rises to a horrible power, half-grotesque, almost half-comic, amid the tragedy. She counselled him to marry again, as he sat sobbing by her bedside. Poor man! he was hysterical, too, with grief and excitement. "Wiping his eyes and sobbing between every word, with much ado he got out this answer: "*Non—j'aurai des maîtresses.*" To which the Queen made no other reply than, "*Ah, mon Dieu! cela n'empêche*

pas!" Criticism stands confounded before such an incident. Perhaps it is possible poor Caroline, sick and weary, did not wish for the successor she suggested a life more perfect than her own had been; and we all know by experience, though we will never allow in theory, that the near approach of death has as little moral effect upon the mind as that of any other familiar accident of life.

Then her Minister, the man whom she had made and kept supreme in England, came to say his farewell. Perhaps Caroline by that time had slid beyond the power of those arts which she had practised all her life. She spoke to Sir Robert, having little breath to spare, barely what she meant, without considering the King, his temper, and his pride. "My good Sir Robert," she said to the kneeling and alarmed Minister, who dropped some tears by her bedside, "you see me in a very indifferent situation. I have nothing to say to you but to recommend the King, my children, and the kingdom to your care." Even in the presence of the dying, Sir Robert's heart gave a throb of terror as he scrambled up plethoric from his knees. Where was the Queen's usual prudence and *ménagement?* Caroline had come to the bare elements, and could now *ménager* no more.

Then she had the Archbishop of Canterbury brought to her by Walpole's coarse suggestion; but we have no record of what passed during the prayers, which were no longer said outside her

room. She desired him to take care of Dr Butler, the clerk of her closet, the famous author of the *Analogy*. On the Sunday, weary of her suffering, she asked the doctor how long it could last. It lasted only for the evening. "I have now got an asthma," she said, with what almost seems a last faint playfulness. "Open the window"—and then after an interval—"Pray."

This was her last word: with it the shadows fell around one of the most remarkable lives that has ever been lived in England. "Her Grace was in a heavenly disposition," the prudent Archbishop said, as he stole through the questioning crowd. Even her warmest panegyrist would scarcely venture to affirm so much now of Caroline. Her life was little spiritual, but it was very human. Her heart was most stout, resolute, and faithful; and she had that quality which Queen Catherine adds, as a crowning grace to the excellences of the good woman—she had a great patience. Never, perhaps, was there such a wife, and seldom such a queen.

II

THE MINISTER

THE MINISTER.

THE name of Sir Robert Walpole does not suggest a tempting or grateful subject for a biographical sketch. He is not one of those heaven-born statesmen before whom the world stands reverent as before so many true princes and sovereigns of mankind. He is not even such an irregular but lofty genius as sometimes aims at statesmanship, leaving only a series of splendid mistakes or fruitless efforts behind. Nobody can deny that he was in his way a great ruler—nobody can say that in fact and deed he was anything but a true patriot and faithful servant of his country. For more than twenty years, sometimes with the generous and intelligent aid of a great princess, sometimes in spite of all the baffling perversities of an ignorant and unenlightened king, against opposition, conspiracies of friend and foe, popular discontent, abuse, every kind of vexing contradiction, he stood steadily at the helm of State, to use the most hackneyed yet the most true of

similes, with a clear sight which seldom failed him, and a patience and steadfastness beyond praise. He served England in spite of herself, earning little gratitude by his exertions. He ruled her as a prudent man rules his own household, regarding not so much any theory of government as its practical needs and possibilities; with a wonderful indifference to blame, and with something of that noble self-confidence with which a man of genius feels himself the only man answerable for an emergency. In this brief description is embodied almost every characteristic of a great statesman, a great patriot, a noble historical character. And yet somehow this man, who ruled so wisely and was of so much use in his generation, is not a great historical character. The student approaches him without reverence, without much admiration, with even a limited interest. In every page of our national story appear the names of men who have not done a tithe of his real work, and who yet are ten times more venerable, more noble, and more attractive.

It is hard to explain how this is, and yet the fact is too patent to be denied. Perhaps one of the causes is that the man has no special standing as a man, notwithstanding the importance of his place in history. He has no private character, so to speak, to catch the human eye. He stands forth in his public capacity, wise, far-sighted, full of resource, ever ready to make the best of everything; but his private and individual existence skulks as it were

behind that bench in old St Stephen's, and makes no sign of independent humanity. A sort of rubicund shadow, drinking, toasting, trolling forth lusty songs, swearing big oaths, full of healthy heartlessness and good-humour and indifference to all codes either of love or morals, faintly appears by moments about the busy scene. Such a buxom apparition is apt to look very limp and lifeless across the vista of a century. It would have been a mere rude country squire, had it not been Robert Walpole. But being Robert Walpole, though it rouses a certain curiosity, and fills us with a certain interest, it has no power over our affections, nor can it move our respect. We admit the actual claims to greatness of a Minister who possesses no greatness as a man; and we are also obliged to allow that the burly shadow was that of a man no worse than his neighbours. He was not coarser nor more wicked than the other people who surrounded him. He was not more corrupt, though he might be more able in his use of corruption. He was always good-natured and tolerant, never cruel. His children loved him,—even that youngest child, so unlike him in every particular, and who is calmly described, with the incredible composure of the time, as not his son at all but somebody else's—the puny and famous Horace. There is something in the way in which that inexhaustible letter-writer says "my father" which conciliates the critic in spite of himself. A man spoken of with that indescribable

softening of tone, must have been a lovable father, could not have been a bad man; but yet, we repeat, Sir Robert is a thankless subject for biography, and it is very doubtful how far any distinct idea of his strange personality and want of personality can be conveyed.

The comparison is perhaps a whimsical one, and it may strike some readers even as irreverent; but yet there is something in the position occupied by Shakespeare as playwright and caterer for the Globe Theatre, which is recalled to us by the position of Walpole as steward and house-manager, so to speak, of the big establishment of England. No doubt the conscious motive in the mind of our greatest of poets was less the development of all those noble and splendid figures with which he has enriched the world, than the immediate necessity of keeping up his theatre, supplying the needful variety, providing for his company and his audience, and his own daily bread. His greatness grows by the way. He is not without a certain half-divine delight in the excellence of his work, such as belongs to the modesty of genius, but it is the daily necessity and not the greatness for which he consciously labours. Walpole, with his inferior capabilities, does in a kind of shadow what Shakespeare did. He works for his daily needs; his office is to keep things going, to avert war and expense, to hold a certain balance of faction and national passion. Now it is one danger, now another, that menaces his charge. Sometimes fear of

dismissal hangs over him, sometimes fear of internal mutiny. His practical instinct keeps him alert and with his eyes open—and by dint of doing his work, though there is no exalted motive in it, a certain greatness falls upon the diligent soul by the way. Perhaps his determination to keep his place and to retain power in his own hands, was in reality the highest intention he had; but in his struggle for this, what patience, what force of labour, what infinite resource and genuine wisdom is in the man! It is a curious contradiction to all the higher theories of human existence, and yet there is more in it than meets the eye. It is, in its way, a fulfilment of that promise to him who was faithful in little, notwithstanding the curious sense one has of the inapplicability of a Scriptural promise to such an unspiritual character as that of Walpole. He was not a great patriot, aiming consciously at the prosperity and honour and peace of his country. He was a man in office, zealously determined to keep there, to keep his party in power, his dynasty on the throne, his people solvent and moderately content; and by dint of following this purpose steadfastly through every opposition, the greater end for which he had not striven fell upon him by the way. England was the stronger, the greater, the happier for Walpole; and yet Walpole meant nothing higher than to secure his own position, and do his own work. He was more honest, true, and worthy than he meant to be. With no other conscience to speak of, he had a conscience

for his individual trade, that it should be well done, whatever might be neglected. Such a principle carries a labouring man through his difficulties, when many a higher motive fails.

Robert Walpole, the third son of a Norfolk country gentleman, was born at Houghton, which he afterwards took so much pleasure in embellishing, in August 1676. He was "naturally indolent, and disliked application," says his biographer; but being a younger son, and continually reminded by his father that his fortune depended on his own exertions, he "overcame the natural inertness of his disposition." He was educated at Eton on the foundation, and following the use and wont of that noble institution, in a manner still happily practicable by younger sons, went from Eton to King's. Of neither period is there any particular incident of interest recorded. He was "an excellent scholar" (though this is a statement which the reader may be permitted to doubt) Archdeacon Coxe assures us, and loved Horace. And while at Cambridge he had smallpox badly, and was so near coming to an abrupt end in that malady, that his physician considered his "singular escape" as a sure indication that great things were to be expected from him. At Eton he was the contemporary of Bolingbroke; and when the latter and other Etonians of his time began to distinguish themselves in Parliament, one of their old masters is reported to have expressed himself impatient to hear whether Robert Walpole had spoken, "for I am convinced

he will be a good orator." Such prognostications prove that there was promise in his youth. Other training of a less humanising kind was not wanting. His elder brothers died, and at twenty-two he became the heir and resigned his scholarship. Before this he had been, save the mark! destined for the Church; but when these sad events happened, he went home to the jovial Norfolk Manor, where agriculture and conviviality were the only pursuits thought of. There the young man, fresh from the University, with whatever ambitions he might have had in him, was set "to superintend the sale of the cattle in the neighbouring towns," and in the evening plunged into what was considered festive enjoyment in these days. His father filled his glass twice for every time he filled his own, and gave him paternal encouragement. "Come, Robert," said the jovial squire, "you shall drink twice while I drink once; for I cannot permit the son in his sober senses to be witness to the intoxication of his father."

This edifying precaution had evidently full effect; and the son faithfully carried out the traditions of the house. He was throughout his life one of the men upon whom dissipation has no apparent effect. He feasted high and drank deep, and did all that in him lay to ruin his constitution; but, with the marvellous health which belongs to the species, was as clear-headed the morning after a carouse as if he had been an anchorite. His head stood the trial of these and worse vices. The morning air blew away the fumes

of the night's debauch; with nerves of iron, and the strength of a rock, he reappeared out of all the muddy waves of dissipation with no apparent harm done to him. There are such men at all times, and they abounded in the eighteenth century; perhaps because the race was then more vigorous, perhaps because the man capable of continual self-indulgence of this description, who survives it, is the strong specimen, the selected one of modern science. But he was very good-natured, tolerant, and genial, and helped the old squire to make Houghton pleasant to the Norfolk gentry. When he was about four-and-twenty he married the daughter of a city knight, "a woman of exquisite beauty and accomplished manners," says the Archdeacon; and soon after reigned in the stead of his father, with a rent-roll of £2000 a-year, and everything handsome about him. It was then, when set free from the old squire's agriculture and his claret, that the young squire bethought himself of the big world outside of Norfolk. Probably such a robust nature had been able to accept the bucolic episode with little annoyance, and perhaps even found pleasure in it. But it says something for the higher instincts of his mind that one of his first impulses on coming to his kingdom was to throw himself into public life, and resume a higher career.

He entered Parliament in the year 1700, two years before the death of William III., a young man of twenty-four, of good family, good fortune, and good

hopes, but not distinguished in any extraordinary degree by nature or Providence. It was while England was still in the throes of a transition period. William, the strong embodiment of a successful revolution, was about over, and there were some fifteen years to come of relapse, as it were, into a period of anticipation and suspense, until the new dynasty, the modern race which was doomed to fix itself so firmly upon the throne of the Stuarts, should enter on the scene. Such an interregnum as that of Queen Anne's reign could not be otherwise than a painful trial of the national temper and strength. William had cut violently the thread of succession. Anne made a weak reunion of the separated strands. Though she could not by any legitimist be considered the rightful sovereign, she was yet of the dispossessed family, a Stuart, though it is hard to identify her with the name, and the sister of the undoubted heir by right divine. Nothing but a strong individuality could have given to such a reign any other character than that of a period of suspense and possible compromise. And Anne had no individuality to speak of, some feeble family affection, and a natural horror of her German cousin, rich in sons and grandsons, whose family was to succeed her on her first father's throne. During the first part of her reign these facts were neutralised by the sway of Marlborough and Godolphin; but when the weak queen fell into other hands, all the doubtful influences natural to her position returned with double force. Nothing was certain, and

everything unsettled. At any moment the country, smitten with compunction, and always very doubtful whether it most loved or hated its ancient masters, might have changed its mind in such a sudden caprice as once before had seized it, and thrown up its cap for King James. The Protestant succession might have collapsed altogether; or the young James, burdened by no antecedents, might have turned Protestant: a hundred things might have happened to turn the waters back into their ancient channel. It is evident that, though the noble old Electress with a woman's hopefulness looked forward confidently to her splendid inheritance, her descendants, more matter-of-fact, considered the great windfall as still doubtful. The politicians of the time stood upon their watch-towers straining their eyes to note all the comings and goings, and throwing a thousand straws into the air to see how the wind blew. On the whole, it is clear that most of them felt the slumbrous wind from Whitehall to be breathing faintly and fitfully towards the little peevish court under the trees at St Germains.

The reign of that faintest of Stuarts was an anachronism—it was like putting back the hands of the national clock, and making a weak postponement of everything that ought to be settled. It was a time of vain proposals, of abortive acts, of pretended statesmanship. Those who were scheming the restoration of a Catholic monarch played for popularity with a Protestant mob by such villanous means as that of

the Schism Act, a piece of paltry intolerance never carried into execution. Real national action and internal rearrangement were paralysed. It was a pause between the new and the old. The episode of William's energetic but alien sway had been cut short. Was it the ancient rule that was to return? was it the new which was to be insisted on, and brought in over all resistance? Doubt was in every man's mind. It was the Augustan age, so called, of England. Amid the babble of wits who claimed to confer this character upon their times rose the silvery voice of Addison, the ringing tones of Steele, the first polished accents of Pope, the deep diapason of Swift, the fine eloquence of Bolingbroke, noble of style and poor of heart. But it was not a time of great genius or originality of thought. The distinction of the period was one not unnatural to such a moment of suspense in the serious march of ages. An exquisite perfection of style and skilful management of words were its prevailing characteristic. No burden of prophecy was on the national heart. There was no special message to deliver either from God or man. The passing flutter of little doings came into unusual note in the silence through which men listened for the big breathless events which needs must come sooner or later. The hoop, the powder, the rustle of the silken robes, the lace on the fine gentleman's fine clothes, the tie of his hair, the jingle of his sword, are all audible in the hush of more important affairs. If "town" was the

world then, the world was more like a village than any imagination of the present time could conceive. Marlborough, who had sent the echo of his guns to freshen the air in the first half of the reign, died off into the factious silence of exile in its latter part, and the self-absorption of suspense swallowed up all the nobler activities of national life. Literature pointed its subtle pen, and played its dainty pranks, and called the moment of anxious leisure an age of gold; and "good Queen Anne," one cannot tell how, became the proverbial title of the heavy, sad, and desolate woman upon whose life so many issues hung. Poor soul! she was no more a "good" than she was a bad queen. The mother of many children, yet heirless, on her melancholy throne—swayed and insulted by one imperious and too much favoured friend, swayed and cajoled by another—her life little more than an obstruction in the way of national progress, her death anxiously waited and looked for by eager claimants—Heaven knows, her lot was little to be envied! It is the most pitiful ghost of power that ever wore ermine and purple. Her father himself, banished to the hamlet-court by the Seine, is scarcely so sad a spectre as Anne in St James's, Queen of England, fought over by her favourites, unloved, uncourted, and alone, with hungry successors on either side of her contending for her crown.

Walpole appears to have made his *début* as a speaker and rising man in his party at a very early period. He had been, as has been said, the school-

fellow at Eton of the brilliant Bolingbroke, and a rivalry at once of character and politics naturally existed between them. "St John soon distinguished himself in the House of Commons, and became an eloquent debater," says Coxe. "Repeated encomiums bestowed on his rival roused the ardour of Walpole, and induced him to commence speaker sooner than he at first intended." But at the outset this impulse of competition did not serve him in great stead. His gifts were of another kind from those of his rival. His steadiness and tenacity, and close knowledge of his subject, were not qualities to be made evident in a maiden speech, like the splendid diction and natural oratory of St John. "He was," his partial biographer admits, "confused and embarrassed, and did not seem to realise those expectations which his friends had fondly conceived." This hesitating commencement, however, had small effect upon his career. He was not a man to sink under the discouragement of a partial failure. By degrees his name found a place in all the debates, and his powers of labour told with still more effect in the business of the country. He was no unimportant acquisition to any party. He came to his political leaders not only with the great undeveloped powers afterwards so fully made use of, but with the palpable and unmistakable advantage of three boroughs in his pocket—a recommendation which no minister could resist. In 1705 he had already received a political appointment of secondary importance. In 1708

he became Secretary at War. From that time until 1742, when he fell, or rather until the moment of his death, which was not much later, he never ceased to exercise a powerful influence on the affairs of the country. For the greater part of the time they were entirely in his hand; and even during the short period which he spent in opposition, his place was prominent in the public eye. He was a Whig as parties were known in those days; but not a Whig after the fashion of recent times. The Tories of Queen Anne's day were the disaffected party. Their eyes were bent over the seas, in hope of change. They were allied with the Irish Papists and the Highland clans, and in sympathy with revolutionaries in general. Septennial Parliaments, which nowadays every true Tory would fight for to the death, were then instituted in the face of their most strenuous opposition—short Parliaments being, Archdeacon Coxe tells us, one of their principles. "The two great contending parties," says Lord Mahon, "were distinguished as at present by the nicknames of Whig and Tory. But it is very remarkable that, in Queen Anne's time, the relative meaning of these terms was not only different but opposite to that which they bore at the accession of William IV. In theory, indeed, the main principle of each continues the same. The leading principle of the Tories is the dread of popular licentiousness. The leading principle of the Whigs is the dread of royal encroachment. It may thence perhaps be deduced that good and wise men would attach themselves either to the Whig

or Tory party, according as there seemed to be greater danger at that particular period from despotism or from democracy. The same person who would have been a Whig in 1712, would have been a Tory in 1830. For on examination it will be found that in nearly all particulars a modern Tory resembles a Whig of Queen Anne's reign, and a Tory of Queen Anne's reign a modern Whig."

Sir Robert Walpole may therefore be described both at the beginning of his career and during all its course as a Conservative. But he was above all things Parliamentary. His confidence in the people was about as small as his confidence in the sovereign. Of human nature, indeed, except under strictly Parliamentary restrictions, he had evidently but a small opinion. His end and source of all things was the House of Commons. His policy was in all its characteristic features a strictly domestic policy. He makes his appearance before us like the *maître d'hôtel* of a great, comfortless, wasteful, ill-regulated house. He has an eye open upon his neighbours that they may not take him at a disadvantage, but for themselves, as neighbours, he cares next to nothing. His aim is to reform his outgoings and incomings, to make both ends meet, to establish and raise the credit of the vast and disturbed household. Avoiding all radical changes such as might still more upset the unsteady balance of affairs, he watches closely where he can introduce an improvement, and how he can regulate an abuse. He has to humour the mas-

ter, and keep the servants contented, not denying by times a piece of lavish expenditure to the one, or a sacrifice of principle to the other—but fighting his way gradually through all his yieldings to a more entire sway over both, binding them in with rule and limit on one side and the other. Such a government can scarcely be formed upon any lofty ideal. It is the reign of a practical intelligence very far removed from optimism, and indeed actuated by a low opinion of mankind in general. It is as different as can be conceived from that noble but visionary traditionalism which fixes its eyes upon the glories of the past, and devotes itself to their emulation; and from that splendid hope in the future, that dream of Utopian perfection with which young genius so often sets out in the world. Walpole was unmoved by either of these ideals. He had no worship for the past, no special hope in the future. The thing that hath been is that which will be. Such is the burden of his philosophy; and his work is to do the best he can, in practical unheroic fashion, to set his country into a more comfortable path, to prop up her weakness, to drag her through day after day of special necessity. Not to do supreme good and put down all evil—but to do as little harm as was inevitable, and as much good as was possible, seems to have been the secret of his system. Such a matter-of-fact mode of dealing with national necessities has evidently an attraction for the Anglo-Saxon mind.

The reign of Anne was divided into two periods, as

most readers of history are aware,—the first of which was the reign of Sarah of Marlborough, with the great Duke as general abroad, and Godolphin as minister at home. It was during this period that Walpole took part for the first time in the administration of the country. He shared the power, and he also shared the overthrow, when Mrs Masham wrought her bedchamber triumph, and Harley and Bolingbroke came into office. At this period of party overthrow Walpole's conduct in opposition was natural and unexaggerated. He "defended his patron (Godolphin) with great spirit" from the assault of Bolingbroke. He indignantly refused to be influenced either by the overtures or the threats of Harley. He put forth expositions of financial policy which proved him, according to contemporary writers, "the best master of figures of any man of his time;" and gradually made himself so formidable to his opponents that a charge of corruption was trumped up against him, apparently on no serious ground. "It is quite certain," says Lord Mahon, who is at no time favourable to Walpole, "from the temper of his judges, that even the most evident innocence or the strongest testimonies would not have shielded him from condemnation; and that had he made no forage contracts at all, or made them in the spirit of an Aristides or a Pitt, he would have been expelled with equal readiness by that House of Commons." He was, accordingly, condemned, sent to the Tower, and declared incapable of again sitting in that Parliament—which,

however, as the Parliament lasted only a year and a half, was no very serious deprivation.

This period of imprisonment seems on the whole to have been a very pleasant little episode in Walpole's life. "His apartments exhibited the appearance of a crowded levee," says Coxe. Marlborough and his duchess, Godolphin, the venerable Somers, heads and oracles of his party, did honour to its martyr; and his own colleagues and future opponents, Sunderland and Pulteney, were among his constant visitors. He had leisure to write and vindicate himself in the historical calm of the place where so many a more heroic prisoner has languished; and his seclusion was the subject of popular ballads, one of which his biographer has preserved in the narrative of Walpole's life. The "Jewel in the Tower" is here dwelt upon with the lofty hyperbole common to the popular muse. "If," says the enthusiastic ballad-singer—

"If what the Tower of London holds
Is valued far more than its power,
Then counting what it now enfolds,
How wondrous rich is this same Tower!"

"Lady Walpole," Coxe informs us, "who had a pleasing voice, used to sing this ballad with great spirit and effect, and was particularly fond of dwelling on the last verse, at the time when the prophecy was fulfilled." The last verse was as follows:—

"The day shall come to make amends;
This jewel shall with pride be wore.
And o'er his foes and with his friends,
Shine glorious bright out of the Tower."

This little touch of nature conciliates the spectator notwithstanding the bad grammar and bathos by which both ballad and sentiment are distinguished. Walpole and his wife were far from being a model pair, if stories are true. But they were still young at this period, and the exaltation of excitement, the flutter of sympathy, the sense of martyrdom and its laurels, give the position a certain interest. No doubt there were many jibes less delicate than pungent, much laughter and merriment in the pathetic state-prison, with which its jovial tenant was so much out of place; but yet Lady Walpole's song sung with "her pleasing voice," "with great spirit and effect," breaks in with a touch of human feeling into the too exclusively political tale.

The same strain was probably roared or screamed by popular songsters under Harley's windows, and within hearing of the plotters in office as they concocted their treacherous devices. They had discovered, no doubt, by this time that dishonesty was bad policy, but they had nothing to expect from the exasperated Whig leaders, and not much from the Hanoverian monarch, between whom and King James England hung suspended. As for Walpole, "his imprisonment," Archdeacon Coxe informs us, "was called the prelude to his rise." During his confinement he wrote his name on his window, like so many prisoners; and Lansdowne, who afterwards occupied the same apartment, added the following lines to his predecessor's autograph :—

"Good unexpected, evil unforeseen,
Appear by turns, as fortune shifts the scene:
Some raised aloft come tumbling down amain,
And fall so hard they bound and rise again."

The accession of George I. put an end to the humiliation of the Whigs. This great event, for and against which all England, not to say all Europe, had schemed and struggled, took place quietly enough at last, as if in the most natural order of things. Anne was consigned to the royal vault, and George and the Protestant Succession reigned in her stead, and none of all the conclusions that had been anticipated disturbed the quiet of the nation. Perhaps it was the extreme state of excitement and roused expectation with which the country awaited this event which got it after all accomplished so quietly. Every man held his breath and strained his eyes to watch what his neighbour was about to do, and consequently lost the opportunity of himself doing anything in the emergency. George came over, on the death of the Queen, not precipitately, but with a certain dignified half-reluctance, not half believing in his own good fortune, while the nation stood like an astounded bumpkin, not able on its side to believe at all that the crisis it had been looking for so long was thus summarily disposed of and got over. After the first moment of breathless suspense, there ensued a sudden flurry and scattering of all the holders of power which was little to the credit of England and her Government. Queen Anne's Ministers had all been tampering in a half-hearted

way with the banished Stuarts, thinking of bringing them in again, thinking of making Protestants of them, thinking perhaps some miracle might happen to execute their plans without risking their heads. But they were refused the aid of miracle, and natural overthrow fell upon them instead with a haste and completeness which must have taken away their breath. Bolingbroke and Ormond fled to France. Harley, who would not fly, was impeached, and sent to the Tower. They had ruled badly, and betrayed the national trust. They had concluded the disgraceful peace of Utrecht, and they had coquetted with the Pretender. But yet the hunting out of one entire Administration by its successors was neither dignified nor seemly; and an unusual stroke of poetic justice ere long overtook the victors.

The constitution of this Ministry, the first under the new dynasty, is for the moment only interesting to us in consequence of the curious State-intrigue which tore it asunder. Walpole at first occupied only a secondary post. The leaders of the Cabinet were Townshend, his close friend and brother-in-law, and Stanhope, who seem to have held equal rank, the one presiding over Home affairs, the other, a soldier and diplomatist, managing the Foreign department. The Ministry seems to have been a model of what a Ministry ought to be—composed of the best men in their different developments, men of the same standing, each other's brothers in arms. Yet this well-assorted band, united by every link

that should keep men together—sympathy, common opinions, gratitude, and friendship—speedily fell off from each other, and made as violent a disruption of their forces as ever tore a party asunder, or set the temper of brethren on edge.

There are moments when History marches slowly, elaborating her great efforts, and there are times when she goes so fast that events hurry upon each other too quickly almost to be identified. At such periods it often happens that a fact of secondary importance thrusts forward into the first place and keeps it, throwing matters of great magnitude into the background. Such a tragic episode as that of the Rebellion of 1715 is no doubt of much more national importance than the cabals of the Cabinet or changes of Ministry; but while we are told, like a romance, the short and thrilling and melancholy tale, the conspiracy on the next page to unseat a Minister lingers about our ears somehow with a smack of the true tedium and heaviness of a real event. The Rebellion sweeps like a storm across the country. We know beforehand its fatal devotion, its knight-errantry, its ill-timed chills of prudence, all the woeful tragic story. Its interest wrings our hearts and touches us to the quick, but as a romance would touch us. It comes, it goes, it is over, a strain of wild passion sinking into the wilder wail of an inevitable catastrophe. The reader hastens, with the sobbing sigh of a sympathy which is too painful to have any pleasure in it, to an exhibition of human

passions less trying and touching; and, with a curious force of contrast, the scene lies ready to his hand. It is but a step, but the turning of a page, which brings him back to statecraft and chicanery, from the primitive outbursts of loyalty, valour, and despair.

It was not more than a year after the Rebellion of 1715, when the little *coup d'état* of which Stanhope was the author, and which drove Walpole into violent opposition, took place. A calm like that which succeeds a storm had fallen on the country. Though it is hard for us, in our peaceful days, to understand how such a serious matter could be so quietly got over, yet it is apparent that things had resumed their usual course in England (so far, indeed, as that routine had ever been disturbed) before the head of young Derwentwater fell on the scaffold, or Nithsdale had taken advantage of that favourable breeze, which could not have been better "had some one been flying for his life." As soon as it was all settled, King George, glad to be released, set off for his native realm of Hanover, taking with him his Foreign Secretary, Stanhope. Townshend stayed at home with his share of the work, and with him Walpole, who had been raised to the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer. It is easy to perceive in the situation, not only the calm, but the feeling of refreshment which naturally comes after such a tempest. The danger had been hanging over them for a long time, discouraging all their efforts; now it

was safely over, the air was cleared, and a new period begun. The Home Ministers entered energetically into the task before them. For Walpole there was the still more special attraction in it, that he now found himself for the first time in his natural place. The finance and practical management of the national affairs were at last in his hands, and he threw himself with genuine relish into the congenial labour. As became his office, the debt with which the country was burdened, and for which all statesmen had then a kind of insane terror, occupied his chief attention. He had just "matured a very able and well-considered scheme for its reduction" when trouble arose. The manner in which the overturn came was as follows.

King George, who was much more at home as Elector of Hanover than he ever managed to be as King of England, was naturally at the same time more keenly affected by the politics and commotions of the Continent than an English Prince could have been, or than it quite suited his insular dignity to be. Stanhope, who accompanied him, was an unquestionably able and honest statesman; but it is evident that the temptation common to diplomatists was powerful with the Foreign Secretary. He could not understand how anything in domestic affairs, anything in heaven or earth, could be so important as the conclusion of a certain treaty which he himself had painfully negotiated. At this moment things were in a state of wild confusion on the Continent.

There were, heaven knows how many, treaties afloat, triple and quadruple alliances, broken or half made, by which everybody guaranteed the succession to everybody else's throne. The young King of France, Louis XV., was sickly and unlike to live, and the Regent Orleans was bent upon having the succession confirmed to his branch of the royal family. The Emperor was moving heaven and earth to secure his daughter after him on his imperial throne. As for England, with her bran-new dynasty, and the principle of the Protestant succession, which was periodically and violently menaced by one Pretender and another, her policy was to guarantee and support everybody in like difficulties. At no moment could she be safe from possible invasion in the name of her ancient kings. Spain, which looked on with plaudits when the boy who was afterwards Prince Charlie threw his hat on the soft Mediterranean waves, with the cry, "To England!" might be moved to give the fallen family more effectual help. France, who sheltered them in her dominions, might send her armies any fine morning across the Channel. Even Sweden, in which Charles XII., the last of knights-errant, still reigned, turned her eyes ominously towards our unprotected northern coast; and Russia, big, savage, and mysterious, stood behind ready to back her. There was not a royal house or ancient government in Europe which had not the sympathy of like for like with the Stuarts.

Under such circumstances, a close alliance with

France, our nearest and most dangerous neighbour, was undoubtedly of the first importance to England; and it was natural that Stanhope, surrounded by Continental politicians, and separated from all the assuring influences of home, should have keenly felt its necessity, all the more after he had expended his most strenuous efforts in bringing this alliance about. After all the vicissitudes of a long negotiation, the treaty was finally agreed upon. Then there came a moment of delay. Townshend at home, comfortable in the shelter of the four seas, and in the sense that one rebellion had happily and completely blown over, was, though equally convinced of the advantage of an alliance with France, in no such hurry as his colleague; and the matter was complicated by a personal point of honour raised by the Plenipotentiary whose signature was necessary to the treaty, but who had pledged himself not to sign it except in concert with the Dutch, the old allies of England. Such a little pause in the completion of an important piece of business might have reasonably occasioned a momentary misunderstanding between colleagues, or even division in the Cabinet; but it seems utterly inadequate as a reason for the dismissal of a Minister. This, however, was what it came to. Without any reference to Parliament, or indeed deliberation of any kind, and with an appearance of treachery which excited universal indignation, the King and Stanhope, in the irritation of the moment, dismissed Townshend, and overturned the entire Administration. Lord Ma-

hon in his valuable history does manful battle for his ancestor. But the facts are not favourable to Secretary Stanhope, who was at the King's side, and who was personally wounded by the delay which occurred in concluding his treaty. His colleagues at home, who were working diligently at the internal renovation of the country, had no warning of the sudden disgrace, which fell upon them like an earthquake. They were in a state of perfect repose and security, nay, even of self-congratulation, believing the little mist of disagreement to have blown happily over, when the thunderbolt fell. It is not wonderful if a certain bitterness mingled with their humiliation. Walpole, who was at once the relation and chief colleague of Townshend, though not absolutely dismissed with him, followed his chief after a short interval. The Chancellor of the Exchequer closed his books, and laid down his calculations, and gave up his office. It would be taking but a very poor view of human nature to conclude that it was leaving office alone which moved him. He was leaving a very great piece of work, of work well worthy to be accomplished, behind him. He was giving up the vocation natural to him; leaving others not so competent, not so full of resource as he was, in his place. And he was compelled to do all this without any sufficient reason, because there had been a little unintentional delay about the signing of a treaty, and because the Ministers at home were falsely accused to the King of being his son's friends. This was the sole

cause why their work was interrupted and their party rent asunder. The position was very trying to bear.

Walpole did not bear it well, as might be supposed. He went into the most violent opposition. Against the Tories he had been energetic, yet not unamiable; but it was different when his opponents were his own familiar friends—men whom he had trusted. Against them his virulence knew no bounds. The unequivocal fury of his antagonism brings down upon his head not only the condemnation of more recent historians, but even the ponderous thunders of his own biographer. The ejected Minister contradicted without hesitation all his own antecedents, his expressed opinions, his very actions. "When Walpole asserted in the House," says Archdeacon Coxe, "that he never intended to embarrass the affairs of Government, he either was not sincere in his professions, or, if he was, did not possess that patriotic and disinterested firmness which could resist the spirit of party; for almost from the moment of his resignation to his return into office we find him uniform in his opposition to all the measures of Government." He leagued himself with those who up to this moment had been his bitterest adversaries. He opposed the most necessary and inevitable devices of legislation. He resisted the repeal of the Schism Act, though he had declared it on a former occasion to be more like a decree of Julian the Apostate than a law enacted by a Protestant Parliament. He enlarged, assuming a prejudice which his mind was much too enlightened to

entertain, against a standing army. And finally, he gave up and allowed to drop the investigation into the character of Oxford, which he had himself most energetically begun. In short, he left no stone unturned to discomfit and dishearten the members of his own party who now formed the Ministry. They had his own measures to carry through and his own policy to support; and yet the originator of these very measures put every possible obstacle in their way. "No regard for the public, no feeling for his own consistency, ever withheld him," says Lord Mahon. "In short, his conduct out of office is indefensible, or, at least, is undefended even by his warmest partisans; and in looking through our Parliamentary annals I scarcely know where to find any parallel of coalitions so unnatural, and of opposition so factious."

This conduct, bad as it is, was perfectly characteristic of the man, who had evidently no rule of principle or high purpose to guide him. He was conscientious only in doing his work when it was left in his own hands; and it was almost with the rage of an unreasoning creature that he saw that occupation taken from him; nor could he allow that any other mind but his own could carry out the necessary labours. Nothing, however, could have been a greater test of his influence and power in the House of Commons. Notwithstanding the evident factiousness of his opposition, he lost none of the weight with which his previous services had endowed him. He carried some measures by his individual influence

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alone, in opposition to the Ministry; and Coxe, having satisfied his conscience by lecturing his hero, cleverly draws an argument in his favour from the evident power so uncomfortably exhibited. "Thus," he says, "it appears that Walpole, even when in opposition, almost managed the House of Commons; and being in opposition, he could not gain that ascendancy by the means of corruption and influence which were afterwards so repeatedly urged against him, and which the same virulent author calls 'some SECRET MAGIC, *of which he seemed to have been a perfect master.*' In fact, the magic which he applied was derived from profound knowledge of finance, great skill in debate, in which perspicuity and sound sense were eminently conspicuous, unimpeached integrity of character, and the assistance of party."

The argument is sound enough, and well applied; and the episode is one of the most curious which has ever occurred in the life of a political leader. Few happily have been so destitute of that sense of personal as well as party honour which should have kept him at least no worse than silent, when the measures he had himself originated were carried out by others. But Walpole was not endowed with a fine sense of what was fit. He was rabid when he was driven from his post, notwithstanding the steadiness, the wisdom, the good sense and moderation which he displayed when in it. This is a paradox of which we do not pretend to offer any explanation. It is one of the subtleties of individual character which it

is most difficult to understand. In short, it is character alone which can explain it at all: no principle nor motive which we can suppose to have moved Walpole could have led him to such a course of action. It was his nature, and he could not go beyond the limits which that nature had fixed. He could be almost great in power. He was capable of honest work, of real exertions for the good of his country. But he could not stand by, a magnanimous spectator. Any violence, any meanness, was more possible to him. After two years of a factious and violent opposition, varied by sparks of enlightened antagonism to such measures as the Peerage Bill, which was defeated chiefly by his exertions, he who had been dismissed from the important post of First Lord of the Treasury, crept humbly back into office as Paymaster of the Forces. How he managed to eat his own words, and belie his own actions by this miserable submission, it would be hard to tell. He did it, drawn back, it seems, by some irresistible attraction in office simply as office, which is half ludicrous and half touching. Office was his only safety, his best means of making himself honest and true. He escaped from the greatest dangers to which his temperament subjected him when he stole back, though in an ignominious way. A poor man who knows he would be better were he rich, and steals a heap of money to bring himself into more favourable circumstances for the development of his character, would be in something of a similar position. And yet

Walpole was right in getting back, almost by any means. He was wanted in England: unprincipled, unexalted as he was, he was the most able craftsman in the matter of government that existed in his country. And the means of his re-entry upon his natural career were very soon banished from public recollection by the great piece of business which nobody but he could have managed, and which was then growing into disastrous magnitude and importance, in preparation for his skilful hand.

This was the extraordinary South Sea Scheme, the first memorable outbreak of that singular and gigantic system of gambling which has never since quite died out of England, and from which we suffer in periodical spasms. The South Sea Company was one which had been originated long before by Harley, by way of paying off a certain portion of the National Debt. The statesmen of the time of all parties lived in a kind of insane panic of the National Debt. It went "between them and their wits," according to the Scotch saying. Shares in the newly-formed Company were allotted to the proprietors of the floating debt in payment of their claim upon the nation, and the monopoly of a trade to the South Sea, or coast of Spanish America, was given to them. It was something like giving them the monopoly of a trade to El Dorado, in the ideas of the time. The riches won by the pirate-adventurers of Elizabeth's day had left an uneffaced tradition behind; "a rumour industriously circulated that four ports on

the coasts of Peru and Chili were to be ceded by Spain, inflamed the general ardour; the prospect of exchanging gold, silver, and rich drugs for the manufactures of England, was a plausible allurement for a rich and enterprising nation; and the mines of Potosi and Mexico were to diffuse their inexhaustible stores through the medium of the new Company."

Though all these promises turned out to be delusive, though the privileges accorded by Spain dwindled to a horrible "assiento," conferring upon the English merchants the right of supplying the Spanish colonies for thirty years *with negroes*, and the privilege of sending one ship laden with ordinary merchandise yearly, the English mind, so slow to depart from its first impression, still held the grant as a charter of profit; and in the year 1720, the Government, left, by Walpole's absence from office, to its own devices in the way of finance, received renewed proposals from this Company, "to buy up and diminish the burden of the irredeemable annuities granted in the two last reigns, for the term mostly of 99 years, and amounting at this time to nearly £800,000 a-year." When this scheme was stated to the House of Commons, "a profound silence ensued, and continued for nearly a quarter of an hour." The magnitude of the proposal took away the breath of honourable members. To Walpole's clear eyes the weakness of the Scheme was immediately evident. He was not so much superior to his age as to be easy in his mind about the National Debt; in short,

he had himself brought forward, and with the aid of Stanhope succeeded in passing, bills which had for their object the reduction of a certain portion of it by the legitimate means of a sinking fund. It was not to the principle of the South Sea Scheme he objected, but to its magnitude. He desired that there should be no monopoly, but that the Bank of England should be allowed to compete in the subscription. He urged that to throw so much power into the hands of one company, would place the nation itself as good as under its feet, that "it would countenance the dangerous practice of stock-jobbing," and that, "as the whole success of the Scheme must chiefly depend on the rise of stock, the great principle of the project was an evil of the first magnitude; it was to raise artificially the value of the stock, by exciting and keeping up a general infatuation, and by promising dividends out of funds which would not be adequate for the purpose. . . . He closed his speech by observing that such would be the delusive consequences that the public would conceive it a dream."

With this solemn warning Walpole had to stand aside and suffer the evil to be accomplished. Great as his influence was, it stopped short at that point where all influence and all wisdom fails. His good sense could not convince the folly of the crowd. All that he could gain was, that the Bank should be permitted to compete for the advantages of the new scheme. But the Bank, though willing to engage in

the competition, faltered before the prodigality of the South Sea Company, and retired from the field. The bill was carried accordingly amid the joy of the nation. Immediately there occurred the strangest scene. The country went wild over this gigantic speculation. In imitation of the French enthusiasm for Law's equally wild inventions, all London rushed to subscribe. Clerks sat in the streets with their tables to receive the names; and the neighbourhood of the Bank was occupied by mobs of eager capitalists. "It is impossible to tell you," says Mr Secretary Craggs (who paid with his life very shortly after for the failure of the vast speculation) to Lord Stanhope, "what a rage prevails here for South Sea subscriptions at any price. The crowd of those that possess the redeemable annuities is so great, that the Bank, who are obliged to take them in, has been forced to set tables, with clerks, in the streets." Not merchants alone, but, as in every scheme of the kind, the helpless classes of the community, poor women, poor clergymen, country folks, embarked their all in the Company which was to make everybody rich. Excitement gave voice and expression to the decorous English crowd. The "actions du Sud et les galions d'Espagne," were the only subjects, according to a French traveller, quoted by Lord Mahon, on which Englishmen could talk. And the fever of speculation once excited did not even confine itself to the South Sea Company. Nearly two hundred other "bubbles" are enumerated in Anderson's *History of Commerce*, some of

them being of the wildest character. One of these, which has been often quoted, evidently reached the furthest limits to which human credulity could stretch. "The most impudent and barefaced delusion was that of a man who advertised that upon payment of two guineas the subscribers should be entitled to a hundred pound share, in a project which *would be disclosed in a month.* The extreme folly of the public was such, that he received a thousand of those subscriptions in one day, and then went off."

The folly of the public was encouraged and sustained by the example set them in high places. Not only had all the leaders of society embarked in the South Sea Scheme, but the Prince of Wales himself lent the sanction of his name, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the few sane bystanders, to a company for smelting copper, of which he became governor. "The Speaker and Mr Walpole could not dissuade him from it," says Craggs, "though they told him he would be prosecuted, mentioned in Parliament, and cried in the alley, upon the foot of Onslow's insurance, Chetwynde's bubble, Prince of Wales's bubble, &c." To this is added the significant sentence, "He has already gained £40,000 by it." What is still more extraordinary is the fact that Walpole himself, though strenuously disapproving of the great Scheme, speculated in it like the rest of the world, but with greater prudence and discernment, managing his affairs so as to sell out when the stock was at its highest—viz., £1000 per cent. His bio-

grapher, though attributing this wonderful good-luck in great part to "his own sagacity and the judgment and intelligence of his agents," yet allows that these alone were not enough to have saved him from the universal overthrow. "His good fortune was still greater than his own discernment or the intelligence of his agents, for he narrowly escaped being a great sufferer in the last subscription by the precipitate fall of stock. Some orders which he had sent from Houghton to Sir Harry Bedingfield, together with a list of his friends who wished to be subscribers, came too late to be executed; and the delay prevented his participating in the general calamity." One, at least, of his friends profited by his judgment. The Earl of Pembroke consulted him as a financial authority, whether he should sell out or wait? Walpole answered, "I will only acquaint you with what I have done myself. I have just sold out at £1000 per cent, and I am fully satisfied." The grateful Earl took his friend's advice, and some years after sent to Houghton a fine cast in bronze of the 'Gladiator'—an acknowledgment after the statesman's own heart of his word in season. Whimsically enough, Walpole's wife either did not receive or did not profit by his advice, but held her stock and lost her money. There can be no doubt that Walpole's participation in these unparalleled profits must have neutralised the effect of his wise opposition to the Scheme, and cast an equivocal light upon all his virtuous severities towards it. But, at the same time, what can be said

for the general infatuation which could believe in the maintenance of such a fictitious rate of value, or the greed which still hoped for more than even this £1000 per cent? A high-minded and stainless hero would have kept himself clear of the bubble altogether, as Stanhope alone of all the statesmen of the day seems to have done; but it was precisely one of the occasions in which Walpole's worldly wisdom, robust self-regard, and contempt for the folly of mankind in general, would most effectually tell. And it is clear that it did not go against his conscience to turn a penny by the way, even while condemning with a fervour more honest than his actions the delusive character of the Scheme, and warning against it a mad world which would not be warned. He advised them wisely for their good, and they took no heed. He was not the man to be restrained by any feeling of consistency from a sagacious throw of the dice for his own advantage by the way.

When this frenzy was at its height, and the whole nation intoxicated with dreams of fortune, the two divided halves of the Whig party began to draw together. It is in the same breath with his intimation of the wonderful popularity of the South Sea Scheme that Craggs adds, "There dined yesterday at Lord Sunderland's, the Dukes of Devonshire and Newcastle, Lord Carlisle, Lord Townshend, Lord Lumley, the Speaker, Walpole, and I; and we got *some very drunk and others very merry.*" At this dignified symposium the preliminaries of the treaty

by which Townshend and Walpole returned sullenly to office were arranged; and, as good fortune would have it, the only man who could extricate the country from the frightful collapse which was at hand was thus brought back to the spot and prepared for the emergency.

In August the stock had risen, as we have said, to 1000, and the excitement was at its height; a dividend of 60 per cent was announced; groundless and mysterious reports were circulated concerning valuable acquisitions in the South Sea and hidden treasures. Again the popular muse burst into song, thrilling the jubilant crowds in Change Alley. "Our South Sea ships have golden shrouds," she sang, half joyous, half satirical. Everything swelled the hopeful tide. The Jacobites were crushed, and all thoughts of rebellion made an end of. Who would rebel, when, without risk of trade or fatigue of person, all the chances of a golden Utopia were opening before him? Such was the state of the popular mind in August 1720. In the month of September stock was at 400, and the half of England was ruined.

So sudden, so great, and so overwhelming a catastrophe has perhaps never occurred in the history of civilisation, except indeed the cognate ruin of the Mississippi Scheme in France. We have had catastrophes enough in our own day to know the effects of such a crash; but in the present time enterprise is so many-sided, and its resources so boundless, that one disaster, however great, cannot make the same

impression on the world which was made by the collapse of the great Company which had beguiled all England. "Despair pervaded all ranks of the people." "At this awful moment the clamour of distress was irresistible." "England had never experienced so total a destruction of credit; never was any country in so violent a paroxysm of despondency and terror." Such are the usual terms in which the catastrophe is described. "Thousands of families will be reduced to beggary," says Thomas Brodrick, writing to the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, Middleton. "The consternation is inexpressible, the rage beyond expression, and the case soe desperate that I doe nott see any plan or scheme so much as thought of for averting the blow, soe that I cannot pretend to guesse att what is next to bee done."

This pause of utter consternation and misery endured for several months. With a vain idea of getting some comfort out of his presence, the King was summoned back from Hanover, but was himself too much frightened to be of any service. "In this alarming crisis," says Coxe, "the King was pensive and desponding, uncertain how to act and by whom to be directed." His German counsellors, in a still greater panic, "suggested the rashest measures." Whispers of abdication on the one side, and of such a *coup d'état* as we have become familiar with in recent days on the other, circulated among the Hanoverian coterie. Sullen rage and despair were in the heart of the nation. A more appalling emer-

gency has scarcely ever occurred in popular story; and it was not one of those primitive difficulties which could be solved by a change of government or even a change of dynasty. The first complex crisis of over-civilisation seemed to have developed all at once in the bosom of a society still bearing many traces of its primitive character, and unacquainted with the necessary expedients to meet it. But there was still one man in the country in whom everybody had confidence, in matters of finance at least. He had been snubbed and discountenanced in higher quarters, but everybody remembered him when the necessity came, and there could not be any more striking testimony to his character. "In this moment of suspense and agitation, the public voice called forth Walpole as the only man calculated to free the nation from impending destruction." It was just after his return to a secondary office, but he had taken little part in the affairs of government as yet, and was at the time at Houghton among his pictures and his trees. It is evident that he did not hesitate for a moment to come to the help of his country; and his biographer naturally takes the opportunity of pointing out his public virtue. But this was not one of the temptations under which he was likely to fall. To desert his post at a time of danger, or to refuse to do his best when called upon, was clearly not a kind of weakness to which Walpole was liable. He went to the rescue promptly and simply with manful quietness and composure. He had to deal

not only with a nation in despair, but with a nation enraged and revengeful. He had to re-establish the faltering balance of national credit; he had to punish and yet to save the men by whose agency the mind of the country had been thus frightfully unsettled, and to give what relief was possible to unprecedented and general distress. That tide had come in his personal affairs which it is the highest test of manhood to seize and take advantage of, and he was not wanting either to his country or to himself.

In the midst of many letters full of melancholy gossip about friends and families overthrown, such as passed from house to house during that winter of panic and dismay, we come at last and suddenly without any preparation upon Walpole's statement of his plan to mend matters, in a letter addressed to the King. It begins with a declaration that "it was with great reluctance, and in obedience only to your Majesty's commands, that I was prevailed upon to undertake anything relating to the South Sea Scheme;" but, after a few paragraphs, goes on to set his proposal before the alarmed and startled monarch. The details of the measure have ceased to be interesting, and indeed were never carried out; but the mere fact that Walpole was at work on the difficulty seems to have had a soothing effect on the country. His intervention to a certain extent restored popular confidence, but it did not moderate the rage of the nation against the unfortunate men, many of them great losers in their own persons, who

had been at the head of the Company. "Parliament met in a mood like the people's, terror-stricken, bewildered, and thirsting for vengeance." Summary justice upon the directors was demanded on all sides. "The Roman lawgivers had not foreseen the possible existence of a parricide," said one speaker; "but as soon as the first monster appeared he was sewn in a sack and cast headlong into the Tiber; and as I think the contrivers of the South Sea Scheme to be the parricides of their country, I shall willingly see them undergo the same punishment." Another, with grim jocularity, which raised still more grim laughter in the furious assembly, referred to the special need of hemp at that crisis! Petitions poured in from all parts of the country praying for condign punishment on these "monsters of pride and covetousness," "the cannibals of Change Alley, the infamous betrayers of their country." "Let them only be hanged, but hanged speedily," exclaimed a furious letter-writer in the newspapers. The sneer of Steele at these unfortunate men, as "a few ciphering citts, a species of men of equal capacity in all respects (that of cheating a deluded people only excepted) with those animals who saved the Capitol!" sinks into gentle comment before the blood and vengeance demanded by other contemporaries. When the committee of investigation began its labours, it "exposed," says Coxe, "a scene of fraud and iniquity almost unparalleled in the annals of history." Fictitious stock to a large amount had been created

for distribution among different members of the Ministry and influential persons to secure the passing of the South Sea Bill. Sunderland himself, the head of the Government, was credited with £50,000 worth of these false shares; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Aislabie, was also deeply involved. The latter was committed to the Tower, while the city blazed with bonfires. Secretary Craggs died suddenly of smallpox and excitement. Some of the directors fled; all of them had their fortunes confiscated, with the exception of some miserable remnant allotted to each to save them from downright beggary. Sunderland was acquitted, not because of any innocence on his part, but from his party's need of him, and Walpole's strenuous support. During all this period of vindictive fury, the man who alone could bring any order out of the chaos was compelled to stand aside and look on while the infuriated multitude wrought its will. "Mr Walpole's corner sat mute as fishes," says Brodrick, while describing to the Irish Chancellor the badgering to which the unfortunate directors were subjected. He could no more stem the tide of popular rage than he could, not quite a year before, stay by his solemn warning the resistless eagerness for gain which had swept everybody to the feet of these same directors. He seems to have stood by with the only wisdom practicable under the circumstances, and permitted the wild storm to rage itself out. Confiscations, impeachments, disabilities, rained down out of the

angry skies without any possibility of restraint. And the passive opposition with which Walpole met these violent measures, as well as his ardent defence of Sunderland, a man whom he had no occasion to love, gained him the name of *the Screen* among his political enemies. Under the circumstances, it was a creditable title.

The final settlement of this melancholy business was made by a second bill "for the restoration of public credit," which was passed in the early part of the year 1721, by which the proprietors of South Sea stock received on the whole a composition of about 40 per cent of their debts. This is the last of the ill-fated Scheme. Various ruined lords had to seek for themselves colonial governorships and other poor posts by way of escape. Oddly enough, except Walpole himself, building galleries and collecting pictures in his Norfolk manor, and the one lucky lord who sent him that 'Gladiator' from Rome, no single shadow of good fortune appears among all the spectres of this universal and overwhelming disaster.

With this strange scene all possibility of permanent opposition to the autocracy and genial despotism of Robert Walpole, the only man who had nerve, steadiness, and capacity sufficient for the occasion, seems to have been at an end. Death, too, and ruin aided him in a sad but effectual way. Stanhope, his only real rival, was so far one of the victims of the South Sea business that in the passion and fury of debate

he was seized by violent illness, and died suddenly. The younger Craggs, Secretary of State, died, as we have said, while the report of the committee of investigation was being given in, of smallpox, to which no doubt his anxiety and excitement had rendered him specially liable. His father committed suicide. Aislabie went to the Tower; and in a very few months after, the name of Lord Sunderland was added to this melancholy bill of mortality. He died of disease of the heart. Thus the complaint of one of the sufferers that the whole matter was to be settled *without blood* was tragically contradicted. It is evident that, guilty or innocent, or rather guilty *and* innocent, — Stanhope for one being above even the touch of suspicion, — these unfortunate statesmen were as much the victims of the South Sea Scheme as if their heads had fallen on the scaffold.

Over these ruins and graves Walpole stepped quietly into power. In face of so serious an emergency the factious heat of his period of opposition had entirely disappeared. He had done his best, evidently with all honesty and zeal, for the colleagues and adversaries with whom he had worked and fought, who had used him harshly enough in their day of power, and to whom he had been in his turn a very bitter adversary. Fortunately for his reputation, no one can accuse him of having taken any unfriendly advantage of the great calamity which overwhelmed them. He was Lord Sunder-

land's *Screen*. He took no part in the violent proceedings against the directors, except to moderate, when he could, the popular fury. His triumph, therefore, was one with no sting of self-reproach in it. Nor was Walpole a man of delicate feeling to be cast down by this strange and tragic sweeping away of his predecessors. He stepped into power to the head of a unanimous Cabinet and a large majority. "In the session of 1724, for example," says Lord Mahon, "there was only one single public division in the House of Commons." The Minister had it all his own way henceforward for twenty years. From unanimous his Cabinet became dutiful; his colleagues, even those whose beginnings in public life had been anterior and superior to his own, yielded to his sway, or were in their turn cast aside by his irresistible influence. Now and then, it is true, a shadow passed across his career. At one time, on the accession of George II., it seemed doomed to a summary conclusion, but only came forth from the momentary trial stronger and more fully established than ever. Even his failures did not affect him as they affected other men. He threw the whole country into commotion with his Excise Bill, and was all but sacrificed to the fury of the mob, yet kept his seat, and next day stood on the fragments of the abandoned measure as strong and supreme as ever. Though English society still heaved and fermented throughout its depths with Jacobite plots; though it was still possible that such a man as Atterbury in the midst

of his career should be suddenly cut short, impeached, and banished as a traitor; though there was a Drapier in Ireland rousing the nation to such sturdy and unanimous opposition as nowadays seems a kind of miracle; though there was a Porteous Mob in Scotland setting Government at bold defiance; though every kind of jarring element still existed in the three kingdoms, and there were perpetual wars and tumults abroad,—yet neither domestic rebellion nor foreign conflict disturbed Great Britain. "The twenty years of Walpole's Administration, to their high honour be it spoken," says Lord Mahon, "afford comparatively few incidents to history." A strong and wise rule, powerful to resist, yet knowing when to yield; a consistent home policy, in which everything gave way to the interest of the nation, and the as yet undeveloped doctrine of non-intervention abroad was pushed as far as was possible to the temper of the time; a practical tolerance, in complete yet silent contradiction to many intolerant and unchristian laws, which the Minister, while eluding them, was too judicious to awaken into life by any agitation for their repeal: such was the reign of Robert Walpole. It was such a reign as could have existed in no other country, for nowhere else is practice permitted to controvert theory, and Government to ignore the letter of the law. By times, when there are men capable of it, such a sway seems to suit England. But it is not a lofty fashion of government, nor one of which we can be proud.

No doubt what would be simple selfishness if practised by an individual, becomes a kind of patriotism when it is the internal welfare of a nation which is pressed at all hazards, and by every shift and expedient. Yet at the same time it is apparent enough that a policy which would be worldly, contracted, and ungenerous in a private family, cannot become noble, dignified, and great by being translated to a bigger area. Sir Robert's policy was perfectly adapted to the time in which he found himself. It was of incalculable use in consolidating the new *régime* and knitting the nation together. It strengthened our credit and united our forces at home—it set the throne upon surer foundations than could have been hoped for—it made the nation prosperous beyond its dreams. It was, in short, the government best adapted for the time. And yet it was not a government either lofty or pure.

We have so lately sketched the earlier incidents of Sir Robert Walpole's rule as Minister of George II., with reference to the distinguished and remarkable princess who entered with so much insight and interest into all his projects, that it is unnecessary to repeat the tale. The intercourse between Caroline and Walpole is one of the most striking features in his life. He seems to have recognised in her, as she recognised in him, a counsellor really fit to deliberate upon the greatest of national affairs, and to work at that kingly work of reconstruction and consolidation to which our modern England owes so much. The

two who in their day were the most fit governors to be found in the country, evidently entertained no mean jealousy of each other. Caroline was the only coadjutor of whom Walpole seems to have been entirely patient. He spoke to her with a frankness which to us in a different phase of society seems brutal and disgusting. He ventured to discuss with her her most private affairs, the relations between herself and her husband, and to do it with the entire want of delicacy and refinement of feeling which was natural to him; and there must have been a certain visible weight of good intention in the man, and friendship, honest in its way, or Caroline never could have tolerated his nauseous counsels. She must have appreciated that curious truth to his trade, and honesty in his work, which stood him instead of high principle and a sensitive conscience. She was not a trustful or confiding woman, nor one likely to err in judgment from too favourable an estimate of the motives of those about her. Yet it is evident that she had real *trust* in the man who was capable of wounding every delicacy of her nature, yet who stood up with unfailing steadfastness and courage in defence of her husband's throne and the rights of her descendants. She who went into all the details of business with him, and was, in short, his colleague in the government of the country, must have known what she was doing when on her deathbed she commended the King and her family to the Minister's care. So unelevated a soul was he that, even while

receiving that supreme commendation, his mind was at sufficient leisure to tremble and think of how the King would take it; but it does not the less prove a confidence beyond all price—the highest testimony that one human creature could give to another. Nor was this high trust influenced by any personal prepossession. Lord Hervey records for us more than one outbreak in which Caroline, so often stung by his personal advices, betrays her lively appreciation of the great Minister's individual deficiencies. She bursts forth, on one occasion, with a certain sore contempt, yet half compassion, to wonder how any woman could tolerate such a lover: "*avec ce gros corps, ces jambes enflées, et ce vilain ventre!*" cries Caroline, with the coarse freedom of the time, and a bitter secret self-reflection which even her keen biographer does not seem to have divined. She was fond of her courtier chamberlain, who amused and helped, and even had an affection for her in his way; but it was not to him, though he too had political ambitions, that Caroline confided her dying charge. It was to Walpole, with all his brutality, coarse, unsympathetic, and immoral, that she left this last trust. He was, as we have just said, so unworthy to receive it, that in that awful chamber of death, and with the eyes of the dying Queen upon him, he was seized with a selfish panic lest the King should be angry and dismiss him in consequence. But yet she knew that her trust was safe in Walpole's hands; and Caroline was right.

When the Queen died who had been so faithful to him, it was supposed that Walpole's power would break down with the same certainty as his downfall had been looked for on the death of George I.; but his enemies were again deceived. In fact, it seldom happens that immediate results, however closely calculated upon, follow upon any such public event. In public as in private life, the most valuable and necessary existence, the life upon which all hopes hang, and at whose conclusion the very sun in heaven seems as if it must pale—when it actually ends at last, leaves the bystanders lost in amaze that it should be so little missed. The world which God has taken the trouble to make gets on moderately well, and takes its own way, whoever may die or be overthrown. Queen Caroline was no exception: she died, and yet things continued as before. The King, in that one point showing a touch of human feeling, was moved rather than irritated by the fact that his dying wife had confided him to the care of her Minister. And things went calmly on without Caroline as they had done in her lifetime. But though the storm had not immediately broken upon Walpole, it was not long before his practical eye detected the gathering clouds, and heard the growl of the rising wind. The tempest that was to sweep him out of public favour rose in a cloud no bigger than a man's hand. It was a quarrel about merchandise and trading-vessels which at last disturbed the serenity which England had so long enjoyed. To all appearance it was something not

unlike the offence by which Spain not very long ago provoked our contemptuous choler. In those days people were not contemptuous of Spain; but England was then, as now, more sensitive to a petty insult to her merchants and their ships than to great political questions. Unfortunately the cause of quarrel was associated with a piece of barefaced British dishonesty. It had gradually become the custom to send forth in the train of the one lawful South Sea ship permitted by the Spanish authorities a crowd of others, freighted with English manufactures, which established themselves within reach, and poured in their goods to swell the only legal cargo as it was exhausted, so that the hold of the vessel became a very widow's cruse, always emptied yet never decreased. Naturally the Spaniards resented this barefaced smuggling; and they insisted on a right of search, and took possession of ships and cargoes with probably insufficient warrant, as happens when such international discussions are afloat. A certain Jenkins, the captain of one of these vessels, whose ear was asserted to have been cut off, and who carried the severed member, wrapped up in cotton, about with him, for the establishment of his arguments, came in with great effect at this moment of irritation, and an outburst of popular fury helped the cabals of the politicians who were leaguing themselves against Walpole. The country seems to have grown tired of him on the whole. The King, notwithstanding the lingerings of Caroline's influence, was a little tired of

him. His vigour was giving way. He was over sixty, unwieldy, corpulent, threatened with disease. He had not been self-denying or severely virtuous. He had been magnificent and prodigal. His homely paternal house at Houghton had given way to a splendid mansion, in which twice a-year the convivial Minister held open house. His private morals were utterly beyond excuse. Ere his beautiful wife (herself, as we have said, not *sans reproche*) had been dead a month, he had married his mistress, Miss Skerrett. Everything was against him in these days, as everything had been in his favour at an earlier period. The quarrel with Spain, partly by its nature, which was one specially irritating to England, and partly by means of party plots, grew hotter and hotter. There was a weak and abortive treaty proposed which made things worse. And at last it became evident that nothing short of war would content the nation. The King was, and had been for years, painfully held in the leash by Walpole, and now was to be restrained no longer. His faithful colleagues had broken their bonds of allegiance to the Minister, and went each his several way. The people were furious and unreasoning in their desire for war. It would almost seem, indeed, as if war at any price had replaced the peace-at-any-price theory which the great Minister, without putting it into words, had steadily maintained.

It is the evident deduction from all this that Walpole, the Minister of peace, should have retired,

which he could have done gracefully enough, from his laborious honours. Such was the opinion both of friends and foes. His very historian and panegyrist repeats in this respect everything his sharpest opponent could say. "Thus situated and thus embarrassed," says Coxe, "thwarted by the King, counteracted by the Cabinet, reviled by the nation, and compelled to declare war against his own opinion, a single and natural question arises, Why did he not resign? Why did he still maintain a post exposed to so many difficulties, and subject to so much obloquy? His intimate friends urged him to take this step when the convention was carried in the House of Commons by a majority of twenty-eight. . . . Had he come forward on this occasion, and declared that he had opposed the war as unjust, and contrary to the interests of his country, but finding that the voice of the people was clamorous for hostilities, he had therefore quitted a station which he could not preserve with dignity, as he was unwilling to conduct the helm of Government when he could not guide it at his discretion, and to be responsible for measures which he did not approve,—had he acted this noble and dignified part, he would have risen in the opinion of his own age, and have secured the applause of posterity. . . . The truth is, that he had neither resolution nor inclination to persevere in a sacrifice which circumstances seemed to require, and to quit a station which long possession had endeared to him. But Ministers are but men: human nature

does not reach to perfection: and who ever quitted power without a sigh, or looked back to it without regret?"

To this explanation there may be added one we have already noted, and which is of a different character from the fine sentiments of the Archdeacon. There is an instinct of nature which moves a man, in spite of himself, to continue in the post for which he feels himself the man most qualified—an instinct very noble in its essence, and which enables many to hold to their duty notwithstanding much fainting of the flesh and weariness of spirit. Walpole was a better Minister than he was a man; no doubt in the depths of his nature, in the silence which a character prone to superficial and coarse expression of itself could never put into any words, he felt that his work was the best part of him, and that any salvation there could be for him lay in it. With such a dumb sense of the necessity of the effort, something touching and pathetic is in his pertinacity. He was rich, he was old, he was suffering—he could not gain more reputation, greater advancement, than he had already won. What worldly motive had the man to cling to his tedious, laborious profession, to keep himself in the way of constant assaults and rivalry? He clung to his work—it is the only interpretation which seems to us to throw any light upon his persistence. He felt not only that he could do it best, but that he was better in doing it. Therefore he stooped and yielded as he had seemed to do before. War was proclaimed,

though it was against his judgment, and the nation was wild with delight. The joy-bells were rung in London, and the procession of the heralds into the city with the proclamation was accompanied by a joyous escort, headed by the Prince of Wales himself. When Sir Robert heard the peal, he said bitterly that the ringing of the bells would soon be followed by a wringing of hands. He did not attempt to disguise his dislike either from the public or his friends, but stood at his post, and yielded to the measure against his conscience, and laid himself open to all the insults that could be heaped upon him. By this ignoble, yet, when one thinks of it, pathetic sacrifice, he added two years to his administration, and a million libels to himself.

It was within five years from Caroline's death that all this happened to her favourite Minister. In the Cabinet to which he had once dictated, he found himself contradicted on all sides. Admiral Vernon, who was appointed to the command of the squadron sent out, was "personally obnoxious" to him. When he took Porto Bello, the victory was flaunted in Walpole's face as a thing calculated to vex him. Yet when the expedition went astray and came to harm, the blame was thrown, like every other, upon the Minister's overladen shoulders. The opposition against him was led by Pulteney, the acquaintance and ally of his youth. Here and there he found a little capricious and uncertain support. The King, when he requested leave to resign, refused it. "What! will

you desert me in my greatest difficulties?" said George. Some of his old political opponents, men who had grown grey in a continual combat with himself and his party, gave him a magnanimous moral support by moments. But yet the clouds were gathering round the setting sun, and it is impossible not to refuse him a certain sympathy. When he was badgered about the squadron so unluckily sent out, the old statesman burst into a pathetic and indignant complaint. "I oppose nothing, I give in to everything, am said to do everything, am to answer for everything; and yet, God knows, I dare not do what I think right," he cries. "The war is yours," he says on another occasion, in the King's antechamber, to the angry Newcastle. "You have had the conduct of it; I wish you joy of it." To such a pass had the autocrat of Great Britain come.

The last scene of all was one rendered necessary apparently by the custom of the time. After carrying a statesman triumphant over a greater or lesser number of years, backing him in every party measure he cared to enter into, and luring him on often beyond his depth, it was the pleasant fashion of the day to impeach him when his term of office was over, and put him at the bar to plead, if not for his life, yet for his honour and fortune. To this humiliation also Walpole was exposed. There is a trifling incident belonging to this period which shows how every petty possibility of criticism was made use of. He had made a foolish blunder in a quotation, and still more

foolishly maintained his false quantity by a bet with his opponent Pulteney. When he was proved wrong he tossed the guinea to his adversary. Pulteney caught it and held it up to the House. "It is the only money which I have received from the Treasury for many years," he said, with significant insolence, "and it shall be the last."

For the final accusation made against Walpole was that of corruption. It is true he was accused of everything from the peace of Utrecht until the current moment. He was held responsible for all as the sole Minister, sharing responsibility with no one; but the final particulars into which the charge settled was that of corruption. On the first motion, that he was unfit to serve his Majesty, Sir Robert, however, had a majority in his favour, chiefly procured by one curious incident. His old and constant opponent Shippen, one of the heads of the Jacobite party, a man with whom Walpole had fought more or less during the whole course of his political life, got up abruptly in the progress of the debate. He said the motion appeared to him a plan for turning out one minister and bringing in another, a matter which he would give himself no trouble about; upon which he left the House, followed by thirty-four of his friends. Harley, brother to the Earl of Oxford, took a similar step. The enemies of the falling man were kinder to him than his former supporters. "Robin and I are two honest men," said the sturdy old Jacobite who did this manful bit of opposition. "He is for King

George, and I for King James; but those men with long cravats only desire places, either under King George or King James." Of the same stout old Tory, Walpole is reported to have said, that he would not say who was corrupt, but he would say who was not corruptible, and that was Shippen. The honest man was a consistent, treasonable, scheming Jacobite, working all his life in King George's Parliament on the forlorn-hope of the Stuarts. Amid all the wickedness and baseness of the time, there is a certain consolation in this glimpse of him, and in his voluntary parallel of "Robin and I."

After this victory there is a fluctuating record of majorities, sinking to the very lowest ebb of numbers. "One or two more such victories will be the death of us," says Horace Walpole, though he records them with a young man's levity. His letters afford us the best picture of the Minister himself at this trying moment. A few months before the meeting of Parliament Sir Robert's anxieties seem to have been at their height. The King was absent, the Continent was in a blaze, the Minister was unsupported and alone. He "who was asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow—for I have frequently known him snore ere they had drawn his curtains—now never sleeps above an hour without waking; and he who at dinner always forgot he was Minister, and was more gay and thoughtless than all his company, now sits without speaking, and with his eyes fixed for an hour together." It was in the silence that his heart

burned. When Parliament met again, and Walpole had the daily struggle before him, which was the breath of his nostrils, he shook off his depression. "Sir Robert is as well as ever," Horace writes at Christmas, "and spoke with as much spirit as ever at four o'clock (in the morning). This way they will not kill him. I will not answer for any other. . . . Sir Robert is very sanguine. I hope, for his sake and for his honour, and for the nation's peace, that he will get the better; but the moment he has the majority I shall be very serious with him to resign." "It is a most shocking sight," he proceeds a few days later, speaking of the extraordinary efforts made to increase the division lists, "to see the sick and dead brought in on both sides. Men on crutches, and Sir William Gordon from his bed with a blister on his head and flannel hanging out from under his wig." And still Sir Robert persisted, notwithstanding everything—the entreaties of his friends and the attacks of his foes; but at last, by dint of repeated defeat, the hard lesson was learnt. A majority of *one* enforced the conviction which all the sermons in the world could not have produced; and with reluctant steps, the Minister went to his last official audience. "When he kissed the King's hand to take his first leave, the King fell on his neck, wept, and kissed him, and begged to see him frequently," says Horace. "I sit here writing to you, and receiving all the town, who flock to this house. Sir Robert has already had three levees this morning, and the rooms still over-

flowing! You will think this the prelude to some victory. On the contrary, when you receive this there will be no longer a Sir Robert Walpole; you must know him for the future by the title of the Earl of Orford. That other envied name expires next week with the Ministry. . . . There were a few bonfires last night, but they are very unfashionable, for never was fallen Minister so followed."

"The fear of ill exceeds the ill we fear." The Minister who had held office with so tenacious a grasp recovered his balance, it is evident, and felt his foot firm on common earth again the moment he had thrown down the fatal seals. It is a kind of transformation scene, which suddenly dazzles the amazed spectator. One day he is overwhelmed with reproach and ingratitude, torn with anxiety, struggling for very life, the object of everybody's abuse; the next, and the jovial figure has regained its force, the "heart's laugh" rings out, the house is crowded with applauding guests, and Sir Robert is himself, and more than himself, again. The reader pauses in amaze, feeling half defrauded of his sympathy. Under the influence of the storm that raged round him, and the steady valour with which the persecuted Minister lifted his head against it, the looker-on had come to feel a certain interest in him which his prosperous burly figure does not excite by nature. The courage and constancy of the badgered statesman, his loneliness among those factious colleagues, between the peevish King and the irritated country, had

awakened a real sympathy. But lo, a touch of the wand, a pull of the string, and the mist clears away, and the storm is over. It is Antæus who has touched the earth and is refreshed. Sir Robert Walpole's day was over; but the Earl of Orford tacks on a brilliant little postscript to that long existence. Suddenly he glides into a position more important still. He is the secret adviser of his sovereign—he is the courted of "town"—his house overflows—his disaster has turned into a triumph. The change is as startling as a change in a play, and scarcely seems more real. Yet it was not only real but natural. In the moment when his tenacity, his love of his work, his estrangement from all support, seemed to bring him out of the conventional round, and restore him to the region of human sentiment, one's heart expanded towards the fallen man. But it was an unnecessary stretch of sympathy. Sir Robert probably would have laughed at the uncalled-for emotion. In presence of the Earl of Orford the shadow of possible feeling dies away, the incipient tear dries up. A man whose levees are more crowded than ever, whom the King desires to see frequently, and whom his very rival consults, touches our feelings and our tenderness no more.

Nor did what we may call the posthumous secret committee of inquiry into his past conduct do any further harm to the dethroned statesman. When a man is virtually dead and has come to the end of his career, it is vain to rake up the past particulars of

his conduct. Posterity and the world judge him in the abstract, but not in detail; and such an inquiry, however hotly begun, cannot but languish, the object being attained to commence with, and no practical result remaining to be achieved. Even to his reputation, however, the inquiry did good rather than harm. Lord Mahon is so preoccupied with the comparison between Walpole and his own ancestor, Lord Stanhope, that he gives less attention to the question on its own merits than might be desired; but even he, always prejudiced against Sir Robert, frankly declares his good fame to be to a great degree cleared by the investigation.

"If Walpole's acts of bribery and corruption had been of such common and daily occurrence as his enemies had urged —nay, even if they approached in any degree to the representations of them—it is impossible that a band of determined enemies, armed with all ordinary powers, should have failed to bring to light a considerable number. Instead of these the Report can only allege that during one election at Weymouth, a place had been promised to the Mayor and a living to his brother; and that some revenue officers who refused to vote for the Ministerial candidate had been dismissed. It denounces a contract with Messrs Beston and Buller as fraudulent, because the contractors had gained 14 per cent, forgetting that large profit in one case is often required to counterbalance total loss in another. It then proceeds to express some loose suspicions as to the applications of the sum for secret and special services. . . . But if corruption had been common, flagrant, or unblushing, I ask again, why should not the Committee have been able to trace and expose it? . . . On the whole, this Report of the Committee from which so much had been expected, instead of exciting indignation against the Minister, rather drew ridicule upon themselves, and, as we are told by a contemporary, was received by the public with contempt."

Three years later, Robert Earl of Orford died—a comparatively insignificant incident in his history. He had virtually ended when he took his leave of his master, at that interview in which a certain human emotion struggles against the unheroic features of the external scene. The unwieldy old Minister on his knees kissing the King's hand, and the little old monarch crying over him, and "unable to raise him from the ground," as in Coxe's account of the transaction, is a sight which divides the reader between an impulse to smile and an impulse to be sympathetic. The two men had worked faithfully in their way, side by side, for fifteen years; they had backed each other steadily, not with much refinement of friendship or mutual respect, but with a practical support not too common in this world; and when they thus parted, though there seems but little capacity for sentiment in either, no doubt these were real tears. All the possibility of feeling that was in Walpole indeed appears at this emergency. "Last week there passed a scene between him and me," writes Lord Morton, "which affected me more than anything I ever met with in my life. . . . He has been sore hurt by flatterers, but has a great and undaunted spirit, and a tranquillity something more than human." This tranquillity only seems to have returned to him when he had accepted the position, and got over the bitterness of political death.

If the reader has melted a little, as the writer has done, towards this Minister in his overthrow, he

will be glad to learn that a certain Dominichino from the Zambeccari Palace at Bologna was just then secured to Walpole for his Houghton Gallery to comfort his discomfiture. Nor were other comforts wanting in that splendid retirement. His youngest son, at least, attended him dutifully. His pictures smiled upon him. Among other consolatory visits, an old, old clergyman from Walsingham came to visit the old Minister, telling him he had been his first master, and had predicted that he would be a great man. When asked why he had never made his appearance when his pupil was in power, the patriarch answered, "I knew that you were surrounded with so many petitions asking preferment, and that you had done so much for Norfolk people, that I did not wish to intrude. But," he added, in a strain of good-natured simplicity, "I always inquired how Robin went on, and was satisfied with your proceedings."

It would be difficult to find a better conclusion. "Old Robin," whose dethronement the ballad-singers after a while began to lament, is very much like himself in his postscriptal life as Earl of Orford. The reader cannot refuse to share the satisfaction with which, when he meets his opponent and pitiless persecutor, Pulteney, in that "house of invalids," the Chamber of Peers, Lord Orford facetiously congratulates Lord Bath that they are "a couple of as insignificant fellows as any in England." Nor is it without a sense of satisfaction that

we find our Minister privately consulted by the King; moving behind the throne those secret springs which affect the nation, and keeping his wisdom, his cool judgment, his cynical sagacity to his last breath. But the end of a life is always tragic. Houghton has other features than its pictures. There are the Norfolk gentry whom young Robert Walpole had to entertain at the outset of his career, and whom his son Horace daintily sickens at; "mountains of roast-beef, roughly hewn out into the outlines of human form," who "brandish their knives in act to carve," and look "like savages that devour one another." "I don't know what to do with them: I don't know what to say to them; I fling open the windows and fancy I want air, and when I get by myself I undress myself, and seem to have had people in my pockets, in my plaits, and on my shoulders," Horace cries, with a wail. Perhaps Sir Robert, not so dainty, felt it less. But he felt the tortures of disease; he became "altogether unwieldy and helpless." The curtain drops pitifully over the waning life. "With the possession of the greatest understanding in the world, not the least impaired, to lie without any use of it!—for, to keep him from pains and restlessness, he takes so much opiate that he is never awake four hours out of the four-and-twenty. But I will say no more of this," adds Horace, with that ache of intolerable pity which is in all of us at once a tribute of affection and a prognostic of decay. We say no

more, like him. Robert Walpole ended in St James's, when he kissed his gracious sovereign's hand, and was kissed and moistened with the royal tears. Poor, old, unlovely pair!—why should the fact of one being fat and unwieldy, and the other small and "strutting," turn the sentiment into bathos? for after all it was tru*ish* sentiment in its way.

We have omitted to touch upon what is as notable a point as any in Walpole's life and reign—to wit, his utter indifference to literature and contempt of authors, an indifference which met with summary punishment in his lifetime, and therefore need not be now brought up against him. Swift and Gay* revenged their craft sufficiently,—we will not repeat their vengeance. But yet it is worth while to notice the fact that intellect of a high order may be purely unliterary, and indeed it is apparent often is so. The only refined taste visible in the great Minister is that love of pictures which his doubtful South Sea gains, and possibly some other driblets of profit, which in the present day would seem still less justifiable, enabled him to indulge in. A man

* It may be remarked, however, that the assaults upon "Bob the poet's foe," which were so clearly apparent to his contemporaries in Gay's operas and in *Gulliver's Travels*, are only faintly and painfully discernible by the modern reader. *Polly* was prohibited by the Lord Chamberlain, and the Playhouse Act passed in consequence of the evident libels contained in that very indifferent little performance upon the Minister. One reads it like an ancient chronicle nowadays, and one cannot find out wherein the libel lies.

may be coarse, sensual, and worldly, and yet love his Guidos, and be comforted in his downfall by the opportune arrival of a Dominichino. But neither his love of art, nor his lack of literature, had any special effect upon the character of Robert Walpole. It is a particular not unworthy of the notice of that popular school of philosophy which identifies all intellect, and every high mental development, with literature and art.

III

THE MAN OF THE WORLD

THE MAN OF THE WORLD.

THERE are few things in the world so sad as biography; which is but another way of saying that there is nothing so sad as life when it runs its ordinary course and lasts its appointed time. History, being on a larger scale, saves itself from the burden by the constant succession of new figures which crowd after each other on its canvas. The tragic element is kept in check by the larger story behind, in which each individual has but a passing share. The literature of imagination in all its varied forms, poetical, dramatical, or simply narrative, occupies itself with but some culminating point in life, some grand exceptional episode, some striking incident—or the story of youth, ever new and ever varied, though always the same. But the sober Muse of individual biography, which traces over and over again the same inevitable career, is a veiled and mournful figure at her best. Where her subject is one of those brief and passionate tragedies which sweep a great soul sud-

denly out of the world on the fiery breath of battle, or by the fierce struggle of genius with misfortune, she is at her happiest. Whom the gods love die young: the sun that goes down at noon surrounds itself with a thousand lurid clouds and wild reflections of light in darkness; but it avoids all the *morne* monotony, the insufferable depression, the pitiful pathos and weariness of the life which lingers out to its last moment amid the wreck of all things. Age is sad, not so much because it is age, as because the man who attains it stands on a pedestal of melancholy isolation. Death upon death must have fallen heavy on his heart ere he could reach that point of unenviable superiority. The air about him echoes dully with the sound of lamentation; his friends have fallen around him like the leaves in autumn; his hopes in all probability have shared the same fate. If love survives for him at all, it is the love of self-sacrifice — the devotion which leads some child or friend to give up individual happiness for the sake of duty—an offering bitter-sweet. Thus the story of men's lives is always sad. There could be no more awful commentary on existence than is implied in such a series of sketches as we are at present engaged upon; and in this commentary there are few chapters more painfully instructive than that which concerns the courtly figure now before us, the urbane and polished Chesterfield, statesman, orator, and moralist, but, above all, man of the world.

Chesterfield was born to the possession of most of

the good things for which men sigh. The heir to an English earldom, well-born (to use a word at which he himself scoffs), highly educated, highly endowed, a man to whom every prize of life was open, there is something in the very splendour of the circumstances under which he made his entrance into the world which, to a certain extent, explains his character. He was full of individual ambition—the good things won for him by his ancestors were not enough to satisfy his restless mind. To make greatness for himself, to advance by his own merits, to secure admiration, applause, and advantage on purely personal grounds, was the great object of his desire. The vantage-ground from which he set out was to such a mind a positive injury. Had he been the son of a poor gentleman compelled to win his way slowly, in the first place to a living, and after to all attainable honours, the chances are that Chesterfield would have been a better man. But his position changed the character of all the rewards to which he could aspire. It shut out the possibility of wholesome toil for wholesome advantage. It made the favour of a king the admiration of society, his highest aim. From his first outset in the world until the moment when, with a certain pathetic humour, going out for his daily drive, he explained to his French visitor that he was going to rehearse his interment, the man Chesterfield was swallowed up in the actor whose part it was to please, to dazzle, to outshine all his surroundings, "to make every man he met like, and every woman love" him.

In pursuance of this object he laboured as men labour for the noblest purposes of ambition—he educated, polished, pruned, and cultivated himself as at a later period he endeavoured, with less success, to cultivate his son. He kept himself before the public eye; he said his say upon everything, publicly with the fine periods of elaborate oratory, privately with stinging epigrams of wit. Even his pursuit of pleasure was laborious and for a purpose. When he formed his style with all the pains of a professional elocutionist, he was not more completely at work than when he put himself through a course of such pleasant vices as were then supposed to complete and ripen the reputation of a gentleman. Consciousness of himself and his intentions go with him through everything. Nothing spontaneous, nothing unpremeditated, is in the fatally well-balanced being which rises before us in all his self-revelations. We are not sure, even, how far it is possible to apply such a word to the utterances of Chesterfield. The self which he reveals is an artificial self. It is not the natural coxcombry which calls forth a not unkindly smile, nor the wisdom which, however limited, has some truth of experience in it, that he places before us when he draws the curtain, but rather the impersonation of a carefully-manufactured social creed, a system which he himself knows to be hollow, though he thinks it needful. What true self there was in the man, what human sense there might be in him of the failure that attended all his efforts—failure in himself, failure in his boy, humilia-

tion, loss, abandonment—there is not a word to say. With a certain fidelity to his creed which is almost touching in its steadfastness, the old man even tries, after these two failures, to leave the inheritance of his philosophy, with his lands and his titles, to the far-off kinsman who was his heir. Strange faith, which almost outdoes in its pertinacity the highest religious devotion! The prophet had made but little by it, and had failed totally in transmitting it to his first disciple. But with the humility of a fanatic he is ready to grant that his must have been the fault, and gives testimony with the pale lips of the dying that his system itself was divine!

Chesterfield was born in September 1694, and seems to have been brought up chiefly by his grandmother, the Marchioness of Halifax. In 1712 he went to Cambridge, from which place he writes, with a curious evidence of the difference of education in those days and in our own, to his former tutor, M. Jouneau, a French pastor to whose care his grandmother had confided him. It was the month of August, and he had been passing a week with the Bishop of Ely. "In this short time," writes the lad, "I have seen more of the country than I had before seen in all my life, and it is very pleasant hereabouts." A youth of eighteen who could find a landscape like that which surrounds Ely novel and agreeable, is indeed a variety upon the experienced boys of our own day. Already, however, the young undergraduate betrayed his tendency towards the study which

was to distinguish his life. "I find this college," he adds (Trinity Hall), "infinitely the best in all the University, for it is the smallest, and is full of lawyers who have been in the world, and *qui savent vivre*." The account of his life at Cambridge which he gives to his son forty years after, is far from agreeing with the boyish wit and sophistication of his letters. "At the University," he says (writing, no doubt, *at* poor Philip, who loved learning better than the art of *savoir vivre*), "I was an absolute pedant. When I talked my best, I quoted Horace; when I aimed at being facetious, I quoted Martial; and when I had a mind to be a fine gentleman, I talked Ovid. I was convinced that none but the ancients had common-sense; that the classics contained everything that was necessary, useful, or ornamental to men; and I was not even without thoughts of wearing the *toga virilis* of the Romans instead of the vulgar and illiberal dress of the moderns."

Lord Chesterfield plainly does himself injustice in this, after the manner and with the same object as does the converted coalheaver, who describes to his astonished audience the horrible depths of iniquity in which he once wallowed. His early letters show none of this pedantry. They are in embryo very much what his later letters are—full of well-turned sentences, a lively if somewhat elaborate wit, and intense appreciation of all the arts and graces of society. In one, indeed, the budding politician discloses himself with a little outburst of youthful free-

dom. The accession of George I., which occurs while he is in Paris, fills him with satisfaction. If he had not liked it for himself, he says, the sadness of the French and the English Jacobites on the death of the Queen would have convinced him of its benefit. "But when I see," he adds, "how far things had already gone in favour of the Pretender and of Popery, and that we were within an inch of slavery, I consider the death of this woman (to wit, Queen Anne) as absolutely the greatest happiness that has ever befallen England; for if she had lived three months longer, she would no doubt have established her religion, and, as a natural consequence, tyranny; and would have left us after her death a bastard king, as foolish as herself, and who, like her, would have been led by the nose by a band of rascals." This is strong language for a man to use whose future efforts to lead kings by the nose were most unwearied, though seldom successful. In the same letter the young traveller gives an amusing description of the way in which he had profited by his travels. "I shall not give you my opinion of the French," he says, "because I am very often taken for one of them, and some have paid me the highest compliment they think it in their power to bestow, which is, 'Sir, you are like one of ourselves!' I shall only tell you that I am insolent. I talk a great deal, loudly and with arrogance; I sing and dance as I walk; and, above all, I spend an immense sum in hair-powder, feathers, and white gloves."

A curious story is told by Dr Maty, his biographer, of Chesterfield's entrance into public life. He was elected member for the borough of St Germains in Cornwall, in the year 1715. It was the first Parliament under the house of Hanover, and the young legislator took the earliest opportunity of letting loose his opinion with a freedom not unlike that with which he had expounded it in writing, in the letter we have just quoted. He said, speaking of Harley and Bolingbroke, that "he was persuaded that the safety of his country required that examples should be made of those who betrayed it in so infamous a manner." When he had ended his speech, a member belonging to the opposite party went over to the new orator: he "complimented him upon his *coup d'essai*," and added "that he was exactly acquainted with the date of his birth, and could prove that when he was chosen a member of the House he was not come of age, and that he was not so now: at the same time he assured him that he wished to take no advantage of this, unless his own friends were pushed; in which case, if Chesterfield offered to vote, he would immediately acquaint the House with it." The young man still wanted some weeks of being one-and-twenty when this conversation took place, and he knew the consequences, which were the instant annulling of his election and a fine of £500. In such a case discretion was evidently the better part of valour. Accordingly he "answered nothing; but making a low bow quitted the House directly and went to

Paris." Thus abruptly his first attempt at politics came to a premature end.

Soon after this amusing incident the smouldering feud between the King and Prince of Wales broke out into open enmity, and Chesterfield, who had been appointed Lord of the Bedchamber to the latter, was for nearly a dozen years shut out from all preferment. With the hopes natural to the adherents of a young prince, he bore this tacit exclusion from all gains and honours, believing in a better time to come. The Court at Leicester Fields was gay and young, and much more worth frequenting than the heavy old Hanoverian Court at St James's. And though Chesterfield made the mistake of devoting himself to the special service, not of the true mistress of the house and society, but of Lady Suffolk, yet no doubt the life was one that suited him and developed his mind. The wittiest men and the prettiest women in England met there in the slipshod grandeur of the time, with the high spirits of youth, and the stimulus of a common butt as well as of a common expectation. The nasty old Court half a mile off, the heavy wicked German women, the old King with his hideous favourites, must no doubt have afforded the best of subjects for social satire and high-spiced gossip. How it could possibly have happened that Chesterfield found his wife there it is impossible to divine. But there could not have been any question of Mademoiselle Schulemberg when he and the wits of the time met the pretty maids of honour in the apartment of

the Princess's bedchamber woman in waiting, "the fashionable evening rendezvous," as Horace Walpole tells us, "of all the most distinguished wits and beauties."

Towards the end of this pleasant period of expectation, Chesterfield was unwillingly obliged to go through his share of domestic duty in the way of attending his father during his last illness. The Earl had been a harsh and unloving father, and, indeed, seems to have treated his eldest son with downright injustice, preferring a younger brother, upon whom he heaped favours — a circumstance which gives what excuse is possible to the tone in which his son speaks of him. Bretby, the seat of his family, to which Lord Chesterfield's illness called his heir, was intolerable to the young man of fashion. In the whole series of letters, extending over so many years of his life, only two are dated from this ancestral house. In the first he declares that if his imprisonment lasted much longer he should go mad of it; "this place," he writes, "being the seat of horror and despair, where no creatures but ravens, screech-owls, and birds of ill omen seem willingly to dwell; for as for the very few human faces that I behold, they look, like myself, rather condemned than inclined to stay here." Fortunately, the sentiments of our grand seigneurs, as well as their habits, have changed since that time. The modern country-house system, with its heaps of visitors, seems to have been attempted by Sir Robert Wal-

pole at Houghton, to the grave displeasure and animadversion of his neighbours, to whom it was an instance of *luxe effréné*. But Chesterfield loved town, and clave to it. It was "filial piety" alone that induced his exile,—a piety, he writes coarsely —though it was Lady Suffolk, a woman not without delicacy of mind and feeling, who was his correspondent,—surpassing that of Æneas, "for when he took such care of his father he was turned of fourscore, and not likely to trouble him long. . . . Had his father been of the same age as mine, he would not have been quite so well looked after." He was delivered, however, from this bondage in a few months, and became Earl of Chesterfield at the ripe age of thirty-two, shortly before his Prince became King: so that all the good things of life seemed about to fall at once into his expectant hands.

These expectations were but poorly realised. The new reign did not, as has been already described, produce the overturn that was looked for, and the dependants of the Court were grievously disappointed. Chesterfield, however, seems to have been one of the few for whom the King, so curiously baffled and cheated out of his own way at the outset of his career, felt it incumbent upon him to do something. And accordingly the ambitious Lord of the Bedchamber was sent off as Ambassador to Holland, the Minister probably being very glad to be rid of so sharp a tongue and so keen a critic.

It is at this point in his career that Lord Hervey pauses in his story of Queen Caroline and her Court to describe with cutting and bitter force the character and appearance of his rival courtier. We are not told of any personal quarrel existing between them, but the picture is so uncompromising, so venomous and vindictive, that it is impossible not to see some sharper feeling than mere political opposition behind. Chesterfield, with other too subtle politicians, had paid court, as has been said, to Lady Suffolk, the supposed possessor of George's affections, instead of his wife, his real sovereign; and this piece of over-wise folly was punished by the dislike and tacit enmity of the Queen. But even Hervey's sympathy with the Queen's dislike is not enough to point such periods as those he devotes to the description of this new claimant of honour. "His person was as disagreeable as it was possible for a human figure to be without being deformed," he says. "He was very short, disproportioned, thick and clumsily made, with black teeth, and a head big enough for a Polyphemus. One Ben Ashurst, who said few good things though admired for many, told Lord Chesterfield once that he was like a stunted giant, which was a humorous idea, and really apposite." He then proceeds, evidently by way of making his sketch more impressive, to compare the character of Chesterfield with that of his friend Lord Scarborough. The latter, he tells us, "always searched after truth, loved and

adhered to it; whereas Lord Chesterfield looked on nothing in that light—he never considered what was true or false, but related everything in which he had no interest just as his imagination suggested it would tell best; and if by suiting, adding, or altering any circumstance, it served either the purpose of his interest, his vanity, or his enmity, he would dress it up in that fashion without any scruple and often with as little probability; by which means, as much as he piqued himself upon being distinguished for his wit, he often gave people a greater opinion of the copiousness of his invention and the fertility of his imagination than he desired. Lord Scarborough had understanding with judgment and without wit; Lord Chesterfield, a speculative head with wit and without judgment. Lord Scarborough had honour and principle, Lord Chesterfield neither: the one valued them wherever he saw them; the other despised the reality, and believed those who seemed to have most had generally only the appearance, especially if they had sense. Patriotism, adherence to a party, the love of one's country, and a concern for the public, were his common topics for ridicule; he would not scruple to own that he thought the laws of honour in man and the rules of virtue in woman, like the tenets of an established religion, very proper things to inculcate, but what the people of sense and discernment of both sexes professed without regarding, and transgressed while they recommended. Nor

were the tempers of the two men more unlike than their understanding and their principles. Lord Scarborough being generally splenetic and absent, Lord Chesterfield always cheerful and present; everybody liked the character of the one without being very solicitous for his company; and everybody was solicitous of the company of the other without liking his character. In short, Lord Scarborough was an honest prudent man, capable of being a good friend; and Lord Chesterfield a dishonest, irresolute, imprudent creature, capable only of being a disagreeable enemy."

It is strange to think that all this concentrated essence of ill-will should have lain bottled up for more than a century in a friendly English country-house, to be poured forth, so long after both were dead, upon the memory of an ancient rival. It will be clear to the reader that the harmless figure of Scarborough is introduced only by way of foil to the darker lines that describe his companion. And yet there appears no quarrel between Hervey and Chesterfield to justify this posthumous rancour. Unless in some secret path unknown to history, they never seem to have come in each other's way; and Chesterfield, though more immediately successful in public life than his painter, was never successful enough to call forth the bitterness of envy to such a point. The defects of his personal appearance are evidently exaggerated in this truculent sketch; but his portrait by Gainsborough, which

is said to be the best, affords some foundation for the picture. The face is heavy, rugged, and unlovely, though full of force and intelligence; and his unheroic form and stature are points which Chesterfield himself does not attempt to conceal.

The embassy to Holland, Lord Mahon informs us, was his first public appointment; and it reveals a good point in his character, a power of interesting himself, not for the moment but permanently, in those whose public interests were placed in his hand. Holland throughout his life continued one of the objects of his care. Besides his letters to the Minister, which are filled with public affairs, there are a few addressed to Lady Suffolk, in which the private life of the Ambassador is reflected. He sends a "tea and chocolate service" for the Queen's acceptance, made "of metal enamelled inside and out with china of all colours"—and is "extremely sensible" of the honour she does him in accepting it; and he informs his fair correspondent that "there is an extreme fine Chinese bed, window-curtains, chairs, &c., to be sold for between seventy and eighty pounds," which he imagines she might like for her retirement at Marble Hill. He gives her at the same time a sketch of his daily existence. "I have all the reason in the world," he says, "to believe that my stay here will be beneficial both to my body and soul; here being few temptations, and still fewer opportunities to sin. . . . My morning," he adds, "is entirely taken up in doing the King's business very ill, and my own

still worse; this lasts till I sit down to dinner with fourteen or fifteen people, when the conversation is cheerful enough, being animated by the *patronazza* and other loyal healths. The evening, which begins at five (!) o'clock, is wholly sacred to pleasures: as, for instance, the Fornalt (a public promenade) till six; then either a very bad French play, or a *reprise* at quadrille with three ladies, the youngest upwards of fifty, at which with a very ill run one may lose, besides one's time, three florins; this lasts till ten o'clock, at which time I come home, reflecting with satisfaction on the innocent amusements of a well-spent day which leave no sting behind them, and go to bed at eleven with the testimony of a good conscience. In this serenity of mind I pity you who are forced to endure the tumultuous pleasures of London." For these pleasures of course the exile sighs —but he bears with sufficient equanimity his banishment among the Dutchmen, entering into all their affairs with a zeal which made him ever after an authority on the subject, yet with an eye upon the West Indian ships and their curiosities, as well as on the sentiments of the Pensionary and the politics of Europe in general. It would seem that he did so well as to merit on his return not only the white wand of Lord Steward, but the greater honour of the Garter, for which he had addressed a petition to Lord Townshend during his exile, and which was bestowed upon him at his return.

It was after the conclusion of this mission that his

marriage took place—an event to all appearance utterly unimportant in his life, and difficult to account for in any way. His wife was Melusina Schulemberg, niece, or, as some thought, daughter, of the Duchess of Kendal, the mistress of George I., a woman belonging to a totally different *milieu* from his, and who had by no means escaped with clean hands from the intrigues of the shameless German council which surrounded the Hanoverian King. Hervey describes her somewhere as "an avaricious fury;" but Hervey, as we have seen, could be bitter. Only a few years before she had been one of the central figures in a scheme for the recall of Bolingbroke, for which little business twelve thousand pounds were, it is said, paid to her by his French wife. She had been created Countess of Walsingham in her own right by George I., and "her fortune," Dr Maty tells us, "was suitable to her rank." Had this marriage taken place in the previous reign, it might have been supposed a step in that elaborate pursuit of success which was Chesterfield's object in life; but this could not be the case in the reign of Caroline. According to Dr Maty, however, it had been projected years before, but was prevented by George I. on the ground of the lover's gambling habits; by which suggestion two very unromantic figures are quaintly placed before us as plaintive victims of a long engagement, like any suffering curate and his humble love. The result, however, of the postponed union, and the difficulties with

which love had to struggle in this case, is curious enough. "On changing her condition," says the same authority, "she did not leave the Duchess of Kendal; and Lord Chesterfield, *who was their next-door neighbour* in Grosvenor Square, most constantly divided his time between his business in his own house and his attentions and duties in the other. Minerva presided in the first, and in the last Apollo with the Muses!" Chesterfield, perhaps, of all historical figures, is the one that harmonises best with the droll idea of having a wife who lived next door!

After this marriage, however, we hear next to nothing of Lady Chesterfield; the only reply her husband makes to the congratulations of a friend at so early a date as a month after, is the composed remark, "I will not take up your time with any compliments to you upon the part you are so good as to take in whatever concerns me——"! Her name does not occur half-a-dozen times in his correspondence. They had no children; and the wife, it is evident, made little difference in, and was of very small importance to, his life.

A short time previous to this marriage, however, a little event had occurred which was of more account to the hard and brilliant man of the world than all the revolutions of Europe. A poor little illegitimate boy stole into the world in which he had no business to be; a creature without rights, or name, or any lawful place on this earth: and straightway a miracle happened greater than any in Moses. The dry rod

budded, and felt through all its arid fibres the rushing in of new life ; a heart woke in the cold bosom, filling it with the strangest inspiration that ever possessed a man. It was love, half noble, wholly pathetic in its devotion, which thus sprang up in the hitherto barren existence,—such a love as few have felt, and none except himself revealed ; divine, yet most earthly, patient, tender, pure, ignoble, vile. We give for form's sake the record of Chesterfield's existence—so many years in office, so many incidents, pleasures, and honours. But he himself has presented to us the quintessence and sublimated spirit of his life, the best and worst of him, blended in one of those amazing human combinations which nothing can resolve into their absolute elements. This new-created heart, where no one ever expected a heart to be, beating high with tenderness, yearning, fond ambitions, fears, and hopes—yet so mean in its highest flight, so earthly, base, and sensual, so heavenly patient and forbearing, so devilish in counsel, so wise in care, brooding with an infinite and untiring love over every minute detail of the life of the cherished being dependent on it—is one of the strangest sights that ever was opened up for the wonder of men and angels. Philip Stanhope was no more worthy to be the object of it than Lord Chesterfield was to exhibit this typical, awful, divine passion ; at once the love of a devil and the love of a God.

It began in 1732 with the life which this wonderful paternal affection alone made remarkable. The

urchin could scarcely have been out of petticoats, before, amid all his political occupations, between the cares of office and the cabals of opposition, the statesman, happy in his task, wrote out his little epitomes of history, his little sketches of schoolboy mythology: "Romulus and Remus were twins, and sons of Rhea Sylvia," writes the father; and next moment turns to the affairs of Europe, to hot debates in Parliament, to all the whirl of imperial business. Nothing distracts him from that sweet occupation. He could not transmit either name or rank to the one creature whom he loved; but he would make of him, if mortal might could do it, the most shining man of his generation, the captain of a new age. Poor Chesterfield! If he had been a better man, and his aim a nobler aim, it is possible that the heart of the bystander would have felt an ache less keen for all his wisdom and folly and downfall. As we look at him in his many occupations in that bustling world so different from our own, there is little to love, little to honour in the brilliant worldling; but to see him smile over his little letters, and compose his careful abridgments, makes the heart melt and the eye fill with tears. There is nothing in history more touching, more pathetic than this picture; especially as all along, from the tender childish beginning, throughout the patient course of years, the spectator standing far off, and seeing all, knows that this grand enterprise, in which the man has embarked his life, must fail.

Lord Chesterfield's personal political career was a curiously unsuccessful one. His powers seem to have been fully acknowledged on all sides. He not only studied to be, but was, a good speaker; though Dr Maty admits that he was more popular in the House of Lords than he had ever been in the House of Commons. There were, however, reasons for this, which his biographer gives with delicious gravity. "A nobleman was not heard with so much applause in the Lower as in the Upper House," he says. "Refined wit and delicate irony are often lost in popular and numerous assemblies. Strength either of argument or voice, a flow of pompous words, and a continual appeal to the passions, are in such places the best arms to support a good cause or to defend a bad one. The case is very different in the House of Peers. Minds cast in a finer mould affect to despise what they call the vulgar arts; and, raised equally *above fears and feelings*, can only be affected by wit and ridicule, and love to find some of that elegant urbanity and convivial pleasantry which charms them in private life." This explanation is as fine as the minds of those peers to whom the physician-biographer looks up with *naïf* and loyal adoration. Horace Walpole, however, though nothing but a commoner, seems to have been capable of comprehending the qualities of Chesterfield, and describes him on one occasion as having made "the finest oration I ever heard." Even Lord Hervey admits "that he was allowed by everybody to have more conver-

sable entertaining wit than any man of his time." Thus popularly gifted, and at the same time a man of really enlightened views on some points, a sturdy partisan, faithful to his friends and considerate of his dependants, and a personage of sufficient importance in the public eye to be worth any minister's attention, Chesterfield was yet invariably snubbed, held at arm's length, and kept down by everybody in power. Considering what was his peculiar ambition, and the immense efforts he made to further it, the fact of his constant failure is very curious. The few essays he was permitted to make in government seem to have been decidedly successful, especially his Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland. But his useful work stood him in as small stead as his gift of oratory, or his brilliant social powers. Notwithstanding that he had every quality necessary to command success, he attained it only by moments. In the time of the first George he was related to the powerful minister Stanhope, but neutralised this advantage by attaching himself to the interests of the Prince of Wales; and when his Prince became King, Chesterfield, once more unlucky, lost the benefit of his favour with the Sovereign by opposition to the Queen and her Minister. He was one of the men whose fortune it is to be perpetually in opposition. His first embassy to the Hague won him, as we have already said, a Garter and a place in the Household; but he lost the latter very shortly after by opposing Walpole in his Excise scheme. This was in 1732. For ten years

afterwards he not only set himself in bitter enmity against the Government, but was even an exile from Court, the home of his soul, so to speak, and betook himself to the new Prince of Wales as by a decree of fate. Even Walpole's downfall did not bring back his adversary into office. The new Ministry had maintained a troubled existence for two or three years, before necessity compelled the King and Cabinet to receive the obnoxious statesman among them. In 1744, when it was thought his influence with his old friends the Dutch might be of use, he was called back to office, with a grudging promise of the Lord-Lieutenancy in Ireland after he fulfilled his mission. His mission was to persuade the Dutch to join in the war then being waged throughout Europe on behalf of Maria Theresa. The trifling circumstance that he did not approve of this war, does not seem to have been taken into account either by himself or his colleagues; though it is stated with delightful perspicacity by Dr Maty. "Were the account he is said to have written of this embassy ever to see the light," says that candid historian, "it would appear how earnest he was to obtain from the Dutch what he believed they ought to, and perhaps wished they would, refuse." After he had fulfilled with indifferent success this uncongenial mission, he went to Ireland —a post in which he remained for less than a year, and where he distinguished himself by good intentions at least, and a desire for the real advantage of the country, which, according to Dr Maty, made his

name "revered by all ranks and orders of men;" and of which Lord Mahon, less ecstatic and at a greater distance, can still say,—"His name, I am assured, lives in the honoured remembrance of the Irish people as perhaps next to Ormond, the best and worthiest of their long viceregal line."

This is a great deal to say, if we could have the least confidence that the Irish people herein mentioned were in any way identical with the real nation as now recognised. We fear it is not possible to come to any such conclusion. The Ireland which Lord Chesterfield, briefly and justly, according to the views of his time, governed, was one from which he hoped to be able to extirpate the "Popish religion and influence" by "good usage, supporting the charity schools, and adhering strictly to the Gavel Act." This Gavel Act (heaven be praised not one in a thousand of the present generation so much as know it by name!) was a law by which "all Popish estates at the death of the Popish possessor were divided in equal parts, share and share alike, among his Popish relatives who are the nearest of kin, if they all continue in their religion; but if one of them turn Protestant, he becomes the heir-at-law." The Irish nation which applauded Chesterfield—the people who a few years before had been roused by Swift into a unanimous popular opposition against Walpole's copper money—could only have been the dominant Protestants, who had still their foot upon the neck of the conquered country, and

who have left us so many pleasant tangles to unravel.

It was in '45, that fatal date for the Highlanders and the Stuarts; and the last, most sad, hopeless, and magnanimous of rebellions was in full career when Chesterfield landed in Ireland, of which great fears were also entertained. "In an island esteemed not less boisterous than the element that surrounds it, he was particularly happy in quieting and captivating the turbulent disposition of the inhabitants; and Cicero, whom he had constantly before his eyes as an orator, became also the object of his imitation in his government," says his biographer. He addressed himself, in opening the Irish Parliament, Dr Maty also tells us, to "a feeling people, with the authority of a ruler, and the affection of a father." But he did a great deal better than propose to himself the example of Cicero, or please the "feeling people" with addresses. He was wise enough not to irritate the Popish helots into too much sympathy with their rebel brethren in Scotland. He did not follow the example set him in England of shutting up the Roman Catholic chapels, and banishing the priests, but let everything go on as usual, keeping a wary eye upon possible malcontents, and warning them that, indulgent as he was, not Cromwell himself could be harder, if once roused. He was as tender of their finances as if they had been his own; he took pains to provide arms and other munitions through means of honest men, and not by ruinous and villanous

contracts. He saw justice done impartially, without respect of creed; and did everything in his power to promote the beginnings of industrial enterprise, in which, he was enlightened enough to see, lay the real hopes of Ireland. In the letters which he wrote after his return to various people in Ireland, this subject is the continual burden. He suggests the manufacture of bottles, of paper, of potato-starch, of every new invention he can hear of. "These are the sort of jobs," he writes to his correspondent, Prior, who was a member of the Dublin Society, and a man of energy and public spirit, "that I wish people in Ireland would attend to with as much industry and care as they do jobs of a very different nature. Those honest arts would solidly increase their fortunes, and improve their estates, upon the only true and permanent foundation, the public good. Leave us and your regular forces in Ireland to fight for you; think of your manufactures at least as much as of your militia, and be as much upon your guard against Poverty as against Popery; take my word for it, you are in more danger of the former than of the latter."

In other letters, Chesterfield repeats and enlarges upon this advice, with many warnings against the familiar demon claret, which was wasting the means of the Irish gentry. "I wish my country-people," he says,—"for I look upon myself as an Irishman still—would but attend half as much to those useful objects as they do to the glory of the militia and the

purity of their claret. Drinking is a most beastly vice in every country, but it is really a ruinous one to Ireland. Nine gentlemen in ten are impoverished by the great quantity of claret which, from mistaken notions of hospitality and dignity, they think it necessary should be drunk in their houses. This expense leaves them no room to improve their estates by proper indulgence upon proper conditions to their tenants, who must pay them to the full, and upon the very day, that they may pay their wine merchants." "It may seem vain to say so," he continues in another letter, "but I will own that I thought I could, and began to hope that I should, do some good in Ireland. I flattered myself that I had put jobs a little out of fashion, and your own manufactures a little in fashion, and that I had in some degree discouraged the pernicious and beastly practice of drinking, with many other pleasant visions of public good. . . . Fortune, chance, or providence —call it which you will—has removed me from you, and has assigned me another destination, but has not, I am sure, changed my inclinations, my wishes, or my efforts, upon occasion, for the interests and prosperity of Ireland, and I shall always retain the truest affection for and remembrance of that country—I wish I could say, of that rich, flourishing, and industrious nation."

These anxious wishes and affectionate sentiments sprang from a connection with Ireland which lasted little more than six months. At the first glance it

does not seem a likely post for Chesterfield. But he liked it, took to it kindly, and threw himself into it heartily; which, of course, was reason enough why he should be called away and the post given to an utterly indifferent man, who cared nothing about Ireland. He left his viceregal court to go to Bath, being ill, with the intention of making a speedy return. But the Ministry were at the time in great difficulties, labouring between peace and war, and unable to hold together, and Chesterfield had recovered in some degree his ancient favour with King George, and was useful to them. He amused the King, or rather, to use the much finer language of Dr Maty, "he was assiduous in paying his court at those hours when kings may sometimes lay aside majesty and remember they are men; and, ready to seize any opportunity to divert and to please, he sometimes succeeded in unbending the bow of his master, and seducing him into a laugh," a sublime result of which an instance is given. An important place in the Government had been allotted to some one personally disliked by the King, and to whose nomination he refused his consent. When matters went so far that nobody dared speak of this appointment again, Lord Chesterfield took it in hand. "As soon as he mentioned the name, the monarch angrily refused, and said, '*I would rather have the devil!*' 'With all my heart,' said the Earl; 'I only beg leave to put your Majesty in mind that the commission is indited *to our right trusty and right well-beloved cousin.*' This

sally had its effect. The King laughed, and said, 'My lord, do as you please.'"

When a man could be had to lighten in this way the communications between the King and his Ministers, it was not to be supposed that he could be permitted to return to Ireland, especially as one of the Secretaries of State, Lord Harrington (another Stanhope) finding himself crossed, balked, and humiliated by his colleague the Duke of Newcastle, had just resigned his office. It was conferred upon Chesterfield "in a manner," his biographer says, "which made refusal impossible," and he was "transferred from a post where he enjoyed ease, dignity, and profit, to one attended with great difficulties, and, in the present circumstances, with danger." His post was that of "Secretary of State for the Northern Department," and the ticklish condition of the States of Holland, in which he had a special interest, was, or ought to have been, his particular charge. But Chesterfield was not more fortunate than Harrington had been. He found his efforts neutralised, and his labour made vain, by the interference of his colleague, "who left him scarce a shadow of power." The one thing he seems to have succeeded in doing was getting his friend Mr Dayrolles, one of his chief correspondents, appointed Resident at the Hague. But as for any real influence over the troubled affairs of the time, it is evident that Chesterfield might as well have been in Ireland or at the end of the world. "The two brothers" were managing or mismanaging

the allied armies abroad. Holland was on the brink of general ruin and bankruptcy, with nobody ready to help her, Marshal Saxe on her borders, and England her only ally, refusing terms of peace, yet unprepared for war. Chesterfield struggled his best, but was thwarted on every side by secret correspondences and underhand intrigues. "Charles Bentinck arrived here the day before yesterday," he writes to Dayrolles; "but what his business is is yet a secret to me, neither his brother nor he thinking it necessary to communicate anything to me, though in my department. The affairs are all transacted secretly with the Duke of Newcastle, Sandwich, and Chabannes." "You judge very right," he adds, "in thinking that it must be very disagreeable to tug at the oar with one who cannot row, and yet will be so paddling as to hinder you from rowing. . . . Neither the state of foreign nor domestic affairs will permit me to continue much longer in my present situation. I cannot go on writing orders of which I see and foretell the fatal tendency. I can no longer take my share of either the public indignation or contempt on account of measures in which I have no share. I can no longer continue in a post in which it is well known that I am but a *commis*, and in which I have not been able to do one service to any man, though ever so necessitous, lest I should be supposed to have any power, and my colleague not the whole."

Thus disgusted with the plottings which took away everything but the semblance of power from his hands,

he resigned his office, and with it political life. This was in the beginning of the year 1748; so that, notwithstanding his long devotion to politics, he was in office altogether only about six years out of the two-and-twenty which he had spent in the service of the public. When it is considered how great and versatile his talents were, what a thirst for "pleasing" possessed him, and how many advantages he had in the outset of his career, this is very unaccountable. No other statesman of his day was so continually thwarted, so thrust aside by every possible rival. The scraps of power he enjoyed were wrung from the governments under which he held office chiefly by the impossibility of finding any one else fit for the post. No party wanted him, or sought his support. And yet, in addition to his personal claims, he had the positive recommendation of having done all the work intrusted to him well, and of having, in one case at least, shown real meaning and intention, and a true idea of the position. Whether it might be that he was too clever for his colleagues, none of whom were men of genius, or in reality too subtle for the work itself, going about it with craft that overshot its mark, as in his idea of ruling George II. by means first of Lady Suffolk and then of Lady Yarmouth, it is impossible to say. But notwithstanding that success was the object of his life, notwithstanding what has been called the marketable morality which moved him, and the want of any harsh and uncompromising principle that could have stood in his way, it is evident that Chesterfield's

political life was a failure—a weary, thankless, hopeless struggle for an end which he could never attain.

A curious evidence of the conscientiousness of a man from whom we are little disposed to expect such a quality is conveyed to us in the fact that, though intensely addicted to gambling, he gave it up entirely while in office. The night after his resignation he went back to his favourite weakness; an example of public, if not of personal, virtue.

All this time, however, while he had been fighting in opposition and struggling in office, "the boy," the great object of his life, had been growing into intelligence and early manhood. We have no absolute ground on which to form a judgment of what this boy was. He appears to us in the curious seclusion of a being continually addressed but never replying, covered as with a veil of silence and passive opposition. We do not know that he put himself in opposition; indeed what evidence there is would seem to say that he never opposed anything in actual words; but the fact that all the volumes addressed to him are left without audible reply, invests the unseen figure with this air of resistance, silent and unexpressed. So far as appears, Philip Stanhope must have been a lout of learning, sufficiently good intentions, and talent enough to be the despair of any ambitious father—a boy capable of solid instruction to any amount, taking in his education with a certain stolid persistence, and following the counsels addressed to him with exasperating docility, but no sort of

spontaneous impulse. As we glance over these brilliant, worldly, hideous pages—the often repeated injunctions, the elaborately varied advice, the repetition, line upon line and precept upon precept, of all that code of manners and morals,—a profound pity for the unhappy lad upon whom this stream descended will by times move the mind of the reader. How it must have worried, vexed, disquieted, and discouraged the cub who was more bear than lion!—how his languid ambition must have sickened and his feeble desires languished under the goad of that enthusiasm which never flags!—how he must have hated the mere idea of "pleasing" or attempting to please! We have no record that the boy was wicked, as he might well have been. Judging by human nature in general, indeed, one would be more disposed to believe that he must have subsided into dull virtue, of that tame domestic order which dismayed his father's soul. Such a hypothesis would be justified by the discovery of his marriage, which Chesterfield made only after his death. In his wanderings over the Continent and in his life in Paris he appears but dimly, under the rain of command, counsel, direction, criticism, raillery, and persuasion, which shrouds him round like a mist. The position is tragic from the father's side, but it is half absurd and half pitiful on that of the son. If any kind of response had but come now and then out of the stillness, it would have broken the spell a little. But the voiceless soul stands mute, and takes all in—or throws all off from the

armour of *amour propre* and self-will—one cannot tell which. It is the most curious situation, humorous, touching, laughable.

Out of the clouds and darkness appears the one man talking eagerly, straining his eyes, straining all his faculties, employing all the resources of infinite skill and patience to touch and influence the other; and that other opposing a dead silence, a heavy acquiescence, a passive resistance to all this vehemence, eagerness, and passion. The poor fellow's brains must have got confused with the eloquence poured forth upon him, the keen pricks of ridicule, the instructions which omit nothing and leave nothing to private judgment. The spectator weeps a tear of blood for the father, thus staking all upon one throw; but there is also a certain pity in his mind for the boy. What effect could such perpetual stimulants have upon a tame nature incapable of any sovereign impulse? Philip Stanhope must have listened with weariness, with dull struggles of impatience, with a growing bewilderment—he must have sought refuge in silence, in obscurity and concealment. No doubt he felt with the infallible certainty of self-consciousness that he was not a man who could ever fill up the ideal set before him. The desire of his soul must have been to be let alone. On the other side, that passion of parental love which insists on perfection, and demands success—which would give its last drop of blood for its child, yet requires from him a strain of excellence, a height of attainment to which only

genius could reach—has, notwithstanding all its faults, but too sure a claim upon our sympathies.

Nothing could be more careful and elaborate than Philip Stanhope's education. When the child had attained his eighth year, we find him in the hands of three masters—Mr Maittaire, who seems to have had the principal charge of him: a classical tutor, and a French one—besides the unceasing letters of his father, who had already begun to discourse to him on his own improvement, mental, social, and spiritual. Already at this early age a thousand inducements, warnings, subtle little strokes of wit, and delicate railleries, are poured forth upon the boy to convince him of the necessity of those graces which he seems from the beginning to have held at arm's length. It must have been a certain hunger of the heart, and aching need of companionship, which induced Chesterfield to set up this little boy into the position of a reasoning and reasonable creature, and address him almost as man to man; or else the child must have revealed his character at a singularly early period to the keen eye which scrutinised him from every point, and to which nothing that concerned him was indifferent. At eight years old the burden of the strain is very much what it is at eighteen. "Il suive souvent," the anxious father says to the awkward urchin, "qu'un homme qui a beaucoup d'esprit, et qui ne sait pas vivre, est moins bien reçu qu'un homme qui a moins d'esprit mais qui a *du monde*. . . . Cet objet merite votre attention: pensez y donc, et

joignez la modestie à une assurance polie et aisée." A little later Philip was sent to Westminster School, where, Dr Maty informs us, "he acquired a great fund of classical erudition," and where his progress in every possible way was watched over and accompanied by the same running commentary of advice, encouragement, soft raillery, the tender humour of a much-experienced man flowing forth on the young soul from whom he expects everything with a hopefulness of love which no experience can teach. "Whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing well," he says, and goads the boy thereupon with playful pricks of ridicule. Chesterfield was busy in his short reign in Ireland at this moment, and his letters were few. But his many occupations did not interfere with the one correspondence of his life. Amid all his cares he had time to attend to "the book that I published not quite fourteen years ago. It is a small quarto," he says, with that soft laugh in his voice which is so near tears and so tremulous with love; "and though I say it myself, there is something good in it: but at the same time it is incorrect, and so inaccurate that I must have a better edition of it published, which I will carefully revise and correct. It will soon be much more generally used than it has been yet," he adds, with fond hopefulness; "and therefore it is necessary that it should '*prodire in lucem multo emendatior.*'"

And here begins the tragedy of Chesterfield's life —his chief claim on human regard, detestation, and

sympathy. The reader will be more than man to whose eye there steals no moisture, and whose heart swells with no emotion, before this wondrous record. The soul of the scheming man of the world was moved with the purest, the noblest ambition. A fresh life, a new creature was in his skilled and able hands. He would mould it to the highest form that manhood could take. The excellence of all the nations should concentrate in this English boy. Whatever wisdom, love, wealth, troops of friends, the power of literature, the grace of courts could do to inform and improve, should be done for him. The stuff was there, the father said to himself, with proud affection—it wanted but cultivation, labour, care; and he himself, master of all arts, with masters of every art under the sun to back him, was ready for the work. He saw his son already the chief diplomatist in Europe, the greatest statesman in England, adding a new lustre to the name of Stanhope, though he could make no claim to its titles. When he accepted, reluctantly, the post of Secretary of State, it was with an eye, his biographer tells us, to the probable fulfilment of its duties, one day or other, by his boy. From the moment of Philip's entry into the world, a self-abnegation, most touching and perfect, a reference of everything to the new life, appears in his father's mind. Henceforward his studies, his labours, his ambition, have all an object out of himself. His friends become precious to him chiefly in proportion to

their power to serve his son; his wealth, his position, the prestige of his own talents and powers, stream all into one current, tributary to the advancement and perfection of Philip Stanhope. It is a standing wonder to the reader how any man could have so enlarged on one subject without becoming utterly monotonous and wearisome; and it is a greater wonder still to mark the sublime love which inspires the whole, which condescends to the most trifling subjects, and stoops to the lowest vices, yet never altogether loses its innate divinity. It is a love which goes so far as to veil itself, to abjure all its natural majesty, to bring itself to the level of its object, and discourse to him with the assumed calm of an ordinary companion. We doubt whether such a sight has ever been seen in the world either before or since. Even in the estimate which has been made of him by posterity, it is as the author of a system of social philosophy, a polite moralist and sage, that Chesterfield holds rank; and not as a martyr and prophet of sovereign and fatal love.

When the boy was still very young, he was sent to travel under the charge of a tutor, "Mr Harte, a gentleman of Oxford,"—"d'une erudition consommée," as Chesterfield describes him to his friend Madame de Monconseil, but whom Dr Maty gives no very good account of. He "certainly had none of the amiable connecting qualifications which the Earl wished in his son," says the biographer. "Whoever will take the trouble of tracing the different steps of

Mr Stanhope's education, will perceive that this fundamental error in the plan was the source of all the future mistakes in his conduct." Under the charge of Mr Harte, the boy went to pursue his studies first in Lausanne and then in Leipzig, followed everywhere by his father's letters, which exhorted him to learn everything that was to be learned, to make himself acquainted with the national economy of every place he passed through, with its history and relations to other countries, and with everything that could be of use to him in his future career as a diplomatist. His residence in Leipzig was specially with the intention of learning German, an accomplishment so uncommon in those days, that he is supposed to be "almost the only Englishman who either can speak or understand it." But, above all, it was good manners, good breeding, politeness, the arts of society, which Philip was required to cultivate. On this subject his tender counsellor is diffuse,—he cannot exhaust it, or come to an end of the exhortations, the entreaties, the examples, and warnings he thinks necessary. "My plan for you from the beginning has been to make you shine," he says. "*Les manières nobles et aisées, la tournure d'un homme de condition, le ton de la bonne compagnie, les grâces, le je ne sçais quoi qui plait,* are as necessary to adorn and introduce your intrinsic merit as the polish is to the diamond." "You must always expect to hear more or less from me upon that important subject of manners, graces, and address." This is the prevailing tone of the long and

patient letters lavished upon the boy. The skill with which the subject is varied is wonderful. When the heavier labour of education is over, the young fellow goes to Italy to begin in earnest that process of polish to which all his life his father has been directing him —and then there comes to be a certain solemnity in the paternal exhortations. It is thus that Chesterfield explains to his son, aged seventeen, the system of education according to which he had been brought up:—

"From the time that you have had life, it has been the principal and favourite object of mine to make you as perfect as the imperfections of human nature will allow; in this view, I have grudged no pains nor expense in your education; convinced that education more than nature is the cause of that great difference which we see in the characters of men. While you were a child, I endeavoured to form your heart habitually to virtue and honour before your understanding was capable of showing you their beauty and utility. Those principles which you thus got, like your grammar rules, only by rote, are now, I am persuaded, fixed and confirmed by reason. And, indeed, they are so plain and clear that they require but a moderate degree of understanding either to comprehend or practise them. Lord Shaftesbury says, very prettily, that he would be virtuous for his own sake if nobody were to know it, as he would be clean for his own sake though nobody were to see him. I have,

therefore, since you have had the use of your reason, never written to you on these subjects: they speak best for themselves; and I should now just as soon think of warning you gravely not to fall into the dirt or the fire as into dishonour or vice. This view of mine I consider as fully attained. My next object was sound and useful learning. My own care first, Mr Harte's afterwards, and *of late* (I will own it to your praise) your own application, have more than answered my expectations in that particular, and I have reason to believe will answer even my wishes. All that remains for me then to wish, to recommend, to inculcate, to order, and to insist upon, is good-breeding, without which all your other qualifications will be lame, unadorned, and to a certain degree unavailing. And here I fear, and have too much reason to believe, that you are greatly deficient."

"A man of sense," Chesterfield adds, in another letter, "carefully attends to the local manners of the respective places where he is, and takes for his models those persons whom he observes to be at the head of the fashion and good-breeding. He watches how they address themselves to their superiors, how they accost their equals, and how they treat their inferiors; and lets none of those little niceties escape him, which are to good-breeding what the last delicate and masterly touches are to a good picture, and of which the vulgar have no notion, but by which good judges distinguish the master. He

attends even to their air, dress, and motions, and imitates them liberally and not servilely—he copies, but does not mimic. These personal graces are of very great consequence—they anticipate the sentiments before merit can engage the understanding—they captivate the heart, and give rise, I believe, to the extravagant notion of charms and philters. Their effects were so surprising that they were reckoned supernatural. The most graceful and best-bred men, and the handsomest and genteelest women, give the most philters; and, as I verily believe, without the least assistance of the devil. Pray be not only well dressed, but shining in your dress—let it have *du brillant*. I do not mean by a clumsy load of gold and silver, but by the taste and fashion of it. Women like and require it: they think it an attention due to them; but, on the other hand, if your motions and carriage are not graceful, genteel, and natural, your fine clothes will only display your awkwardness the more. But I am unwilling to suppose you still awkward; for surely by this time you must have catched a good air in good company. . . . If you will be pleased to observe what people of the first fashion do with their legs and arms, heads and bodies, you will reduce yours to certain decent laws of motion. You danced pretty well here, and ought to dance very well before you come home; for what one is obliged to do sometimes, one ought to be able to do well. And you should endeavour to shine. A

calm serenity, negative merits and graces, do not become your age. You should be *alerte, adroit, vif*: be wanted, talked of, impatiently expected, and unwillingly parted with in company. I should be glad to hear half-a-dozen women of fashion say, '*Où est donc le petit Stanhope? Que ne vient-il? Il faut avouer qu'il est aimable.*' All this I do not mean with regard to women as the principal object, but with regard to men, and with a view of making yourself considerable. For, with very small variations, the same things that please women please men; and a man whose manners are softened and polished by women of fashion, and who is formed by them to an habitual attention and complaisance, will please, engage, and convince men much easier and more than he would otherwise."

Alas, poor Philip! Pleasing was not his occupation in this world. All these, and a thousand more advices to the same effect, he must have received with the docility of habit and despair. His unwearied Mentor lays curious tender transparent traps for him in the shape of letters he professes to have received about *le petit Stanhope*—all couched in Chesterfieldian language, noting the same advantages and the same defects; he approaches the everlasting subject now from one side, now from another; he embodies it in sparkling little treatises; he drags it in unawares in unexpected postscripts; he prays, bribes, threatens, shows how easy it is, how

indispensable, how attractive. Two large and closely printed volumes, of which this is the perpetual burden, were shed upon the lad, notwithstanding all the double difficulties of posts and distances in those days, between his eighth and his one-and-twentieth year; but Philip major and Philip minor seems to have remained the same lout, with the same deficiencies throughout all.

We may remark, while quoting these letters, that they contain some very remarkable bits of literary criticism, in one of which he assures his son that the works he finds difficult to understand are generally not worth reading; giving as an instance "*Dante, whom the Italians call Il Divino,*" but whom Chesterfield himself never could read, and thought, "depend upon it," not worth the while!

Philip was launched upon the world in Paris before he had attained his nineteenth year, and his father's instructions were redoubled. At even an earlier age, Chesterfield had not hesitated to address his son familiarly on the subject of those common vices which nowadays are shrouded in decent silence, and certainly do not form a common subject of discussion between (comparatively) innocent sons and (comparatively) well-behaved fathers. It is in this respect that these pages become hideous. The man whose care for his boy is as anxious and as minute as that of a mother, gives to his eighteen-year-old pupil direct injunctions to licentiousness. He does what he can to fix his wavering youthful

fancy on one or half-a-dozen persons, and urges upon him as a duty to himself the breach of all honour, purity, and decency — indicating even by name the individuals to whom he ought to attach himself. These horrible suggestions are made with a composure and good faith which astounds the reader. It is evident that Chesterfield meant no particular harm, that he was only recommending to his boy such conduct as became a young man of spirit, and would be to his credit and advantage. The same letters which convey these hideous instructions, convey also the best of advice, the evidence of the tenderest anxiety. The glimpse herein afforded of the corruption of society is appalling. It was a corruption which had even lost all conscience of itself. Nobody can be more emphatic than is Chesterfield against *low* vice—the wretchedness that dragged a man down to the lower classes of society. But things bore a different aspect on the higher levels. "Above all," he cries, "may I be convinced that your pleasures, whatever they may be, will be confined within the circle of good company and people of fashion. These pleasures I recommend to you; I will promote them, I will pay for them; but I will neither pay for nor suffer" (says the stern father) "the unbecoming, disgraceful, and degrading pleasures — they cannot be called pleasures—of low and profligate company. I confess the pleasures of high life are not always strictly philosophical; and I believe a Stoic would blame

my indulgence; but I am yet no Stoic, though turned of five-and-fifty; and I am apt to think you are rather less so at eighteen. The pleasures of the table among people of the first fashion may, indeed, sometimes by accident run into excesses, but they will never sink into a continued course of gluttony and drunkenness. The gallantry of high life, *though not strictly justifiable*, carries at least no external marks of infamy about it; neither the heart nor the constitution are corrupted by it; and manners possibly are improved."

This fine distinction, and the still finer indignation with which the line is drawn, takes away the spectator's breath. He stands astonished and listens to the good father recommending with a benign smile to his son's assiduities a certain fair young matron whom nobody had yet beguiled from her duty. Chesterfield does it with such an air of indicating the right thing to do, that the reader, as we have said, is too much amazed to be able for the moment to realise any other feeling. When the poor boy was but fifteen, in Switzerland, his father had asked him playfully if he had yet found "quelque belle, vos attentions pour laquelle contribueroient à vous décrotter." He was not twenty when this other villanous piece of advice was given to him. What can be said for such a counsellor? He is awful in his smiling experience, his horrible suggestions. Of all depravity in the world there can be none so great as that of the father who would corrupt his boy. And

yet this devil's counsellor, with his wicked words on his lips, looks out over sea and land after his nursling with a yearning love that is almost divine. Such problems are beyond human power to solve. They can be cleared up only by One who knows and sees, not in part, but all.

At the very moment when he offered these abominable advices to his son, Chesterfield placed him, with many a detail of his wants and wishes, under the care of various ladies in Paris, among others of Lady Hervey, the "sweet Lepell" of old, a woman against whom scandal had never breathed. He conciliates these ladies, especially Madame de Monconseil, with the delicate flattery of confidence at once in her friendliness and her powers: "votre garçon—votre fils adoptif," he calls the boy, and receives her report of him, and artfully acts upon it in his letters, while concealing from Philip who his critic was. It would seem that the worst of which the poor boy could be accused was an ungraceful manner,—"une pente à désapprouver tout, et un penchant à disputer avec aigreur et empire,"—sins which were natural enough in a youth forced to premature blossom, and more highly educated than almost any one he knew. His sojourn in Paris, with all the care of the ladies, and all his father's appeals, does not seem to have had any effect upon him; nor indeed had anything. A bear he had come into the world, and a bear evidently to the last he remained. His establishment in Paris would have been sufficient had he been heir

of all the Stanhopes. "You will have your coach, your valet-de-chambre, your own footman, and a valet-de-place, which, by the way, is one servant more than I had. . . . I would have you very well dressed," Chesterfield adds, "by which I mean dressed as the generality of people of fashion are—that is, not to be taken notice of for being more or less fine than other people; it is by being well dressed, not finely dressed, that a gentleman should be distinguished." All these expenses, however, the young man was to keep up on two thousand francs a-month—a proof that Paris was a less expensive place a hundred years ago than it is now.

Politeness and good manners, *les grâces*, though they hold the largest place in these letters, leave space for another subject which is urged upon the neophyte with almost as great persistency; and that is the art of public speaking. *Orator fit* is the text of many a discourse. Everything can be made but a poet, Chesterfield adds, with steady adherence to the proverb. "It is in Parliament that I have set my heart upon you making a figure," he says; "it is there I want you to be justly proud of yourself, and to make me justly proud of you. This means that you must be a good speaker there; I use the word *must*, because I know you may if you will. . . . Let you and I analyse this good speaker, . . . and we shall find the true definition of him to be no more than this: A man of good common-sense who reasons justly and expresses himself eloquently on that

subject upon which he speaks. There is surely no witchcraft in this. A man of sense without a superior and astonishing degree of parts, will not talk nonsense upon any subject, nor will he, if he has the least taste or application, talk inelegantly. . . . I have spoken frequently in Parliament and not always without some applause, and therefore I can assure you from my experience that there is very little in it. The elegancy of the style, and the turns of the periods, make the chief impression on the hearers. Give them but one or two round and harmonious periods in a speech which they will retain and repeat, and they will go home as well satisfied as people do from an opera, humming all the way one or two favourite tunes that have struck their ears and were easily caught. Most people have ears, but few have judgment; tickle those ears, and depend upon it you will catch their judgments such as they are." "You will be of the House of Commons as soon as you are of age," he continues, in another place, "and you must first make a figure there, if you would make a figure or a fortune in your country. . . . In your destination you will have frequent occasions to speak in public—to Princes and States abroad, to the House of Commons at home: judge then whether eloquence is necessary for you or not; not only common eloquence, which is rather free from faults than adorned by beauties—but the highest, the most shining degrees of eloquence. For God's sake have this object always in your view and in your thoughts. Turn

your tongue early to persuasion; and let no jarring dissonant accents ever fall from it. Contract a habit of speaking well upon every occasion, and neglect yourself in no one. Eloquence and good-breeding alone, with an exceeding small degree of parts and knowledge, will carry a man a great way; with your parts and knowledge, then, how far will they not carry you?"

Thus flattering, arguing, remonstrating, entreating, the anxious artist laboured at the work which he was determined to elaborate into perfection. Alas for such determinations! Had Chesterfield been working in clay or marble, his perseverance must have had its reward. But the material in which he worked was one which even genius cannot move. The boy on whom all these efforts were spent defeated them by that dumb power of human stupidity which is perhaps the most awful of all forces. Nothing could be higher than the ambition which his father entertained for him in those days of his youth, when everything might yet be hoped. That he should make a figure in Parliament was the indispensable and undoubted beginning, anxiously looked forward to, yet still a matter of course; and that being secured, everything else would naturally follow. "If to your merit and knowledge you add the art of pleasing," he writes, "you may very probably come in time to be Secretary of State; but take my word for it, twice your merit and knowledge without the art of pleasing would at most raise you to the *important post* of

Resident at Hamburg or Ratisbon." The father did not know when he said these words that he was uttering an unconscious prophecy. Almost the only posts which poor Philip ever held were these two very missions which are here mentioned with contempt.

At last the moment arrived when all these anxious preparations were to come to the trial. The boy took his seat in Parliament at the age of twenty-one; and with "infinite pains" his father attempted "to prepare him for his first appearance as a speaker." "The young man seems to have succeeded tolerably well on the whole," says Dr Maty, "but on account of his shyness was obliged to stop, and, if I am not mistaken, to have recourse to his notes. Lord Chesterfield used every argument in his power to comfort him, and to inspire him with confidence and courage to make some other attempt; but I have not heard that Mr Stanhope ever spoke again in the House."

Thus came to an end all the high expectations with which Chesterfield for twenty years had beguiled his own troubles, the tedium of declining health, of forced inactivity, and an unsuccessful public career. His son had been to mend all and create a new lustre for the fading life; and now the cherished boy had taken his first step, not within the brilliant boundaries of success, but to that flat plain of mediocrity from which no efforts could ever raise him. The event was one of as great importance in the life of Chesterfield as the loss of an empire, and his

personal condition was such as to give every blow of the kind double weight; but not a moan, not a complaint, escapes from the lips of the vanquished man. He must have reconciled himself to the extinction of all his hopes with an incredible force of will, a power of self-restraint which reaches the sublime. He describes himself with pathetic playfulness as "conversing with my equals the vegetables" in his Blackheath garden immediately after. "All the infirmities of an age still more advanced than mine crowd in upon me," he says. "I must bear them as well as I can, —they are more or less the lot of humanity, and I have no claim to an exclusive privilege against them. In this situation you will easily suppose that I have no very pleasant hours; but, on the other hand, thank God," adds the indomitable soul, "I have not one melancholy one, and I rather think my philosophy increases with my infirmities." Thus he takes up his burden with a patience worthy a nobler creed. No more hope for him—no dream of tender glory in his boy. Life over, health over, the dear fiction scattered to the winds that had been his joy. But not a word breaks from the father's compressed lips—not to Dayrolles even, not to Madame de Monconseil, who had shared his hopes and schemes, does he ever acknowledge that Philip has failed. Never was there a picture of proud patience, love, and self-command more complete.

Some years after, young Stanhope went to Hamburg as Resident there, a post which his father imme-

diately, with the strange half-conscious cunning of affection, represents to himself and everybody else as for the moment exceptionally important. He afterwards went to Ratisbon, as if a certain fate had attended Chesterfield's words. A better appointment, that of Resident at Venice, of which he had been confident, was refused by the King himself, on account of his illegitimate birth—a sting which his father must have felt in all its keenness. Finally he went to Dresden, and after repeated attacks of illness, died there at the age of thirty-six. The fact of his failure does not diminish Chesterfield's care of him, nor make his eagerness to seize every opportunity of advancing or improving both him and his position less apparent. But the interest of the reader fails in Philip when his education is over. From the moment we ascertain how little credit he will ever do to all those pains, how little he will ever realise all those hopes, a certain anger and contempt takes possession of the spectator's mind. We are less patient with him than is his father. Indignation takes the place of forbearance. But yet the unfortunate young fellow, forced upwards to a point of attainment which nature forbade him to reach, put upon a strain to which his strength was totally unequal, is not without a certain claim upon our sympathy. No doubt his father at the last, opening his sad eyes, came to recognise the limits of nature, and suffered the last pang of paternal pride,—the consent of his own judgment that nothing else

was possible—the melancholy indulgence of contempt.

After Philip's death a discovery almost more miserable was made by his father. The son for whom he had done so much, and with whom he had given up, as it were, the privileges of a father, to insure perfect confidence and trust, had contracted a secret marriage, which he had not the courage, even on his deathbed, to reveal. We judge of the effect of this communication only by analogy, for Chesterfield still says not a word of his own pangs; no plaint breaks from him on his son's death, no word of reproach or unkindness disturbs the grave politeness with which he addresses the widow of whose existence he had no idea. There is something awful in the silence with which the old man shrouds his heart,—that heart which had spoken so lavishly, so minutely, so tenderly in the old days. Deaf, old, feeble, racked with pain, worn out with the exquisite contrivances of suffering which are permitted to strike us, body and soul, in our most susceptible parts, not one cry still breaks from his lips. Half Christian, half Stoic, he stands alone and sees everything he had loved and trusted crumble down around him; and says nothing. It is as a polished trifler, a social philosopher, an instance of extreme cultivation, *finesse*, and falsehood, that the ordinary English reader looks upon Chesterfield; yet there he stands, sad as any prophet, stern as a Roman, patient as a Christian, forgiving all things, bearing all things.

Strange, solemn, almost sublime ending to an unheroic life.

For at the very last of all, after all those griefs, his heart does not close up, as a heart ravaged by overmuch love might well be expected to do. He could still take thought for his heir, and put down, over again for his use, his own epitome of philosophy; and the last letter we shall quote is one addressed to his grandsons, Philip's boys, born in secret, whose very being he might have taken as an injury, had he been as worldly a man as he gave himself out to be, but whom, on the contrary, he took to his heart, and at once undertook to provide for from the moment he was aware of their existence. It is thus he writes in the last year of his life, when worn down by weakness and suffering, to these two children:—

TO CHARLES AND PHILIP STANHOPE.

"I received a few days ago two of the best written letters I ever saw in my life—the one signed Charles Stanhope, the other Philip Stanhope. As for you, Charles, I did not wonder at it, for you will take pains, and are a lover of letters; but you idle rogue, you Phil, how came you to write so well that one can almost say of you two, *Et cantare pares et respondere parati?* Charles will explain this Latin to you.

"I am told, Phil, that you have got a nickname at school from your intimacy with Master Strangeways, and that they called you Master Strangerways—for to be sure you are a strange boy. Is this true?

"Tell me what you would have me bring you both from home, and I will bring it you when I come to town. In the mean time, God bless you both!——"

With this last touch of nature let us wind up the

pathetic record. "Give Dayrolles a chair," were the dying man's last words, they say; and the attendant doctor calls the world to observe that "his good-breeding quitted him only with his life." But with all deference to established prejudices, we believe our readers will conclude with us that the tender little letter above is a more true conclusion to that strange force of paternal love which lasted as long as Chesterfield's life.

We are aware that in all this we have departed entirely from the traditional usage which should have made Chesterfield's Letters and his system of philosophy our subject instead of himself. These Letters are within everybody's reach: but they are not so wonderful, so unique, or so manifold, as was the man.

IV

THE WOMAN OF FASHION

THE WOMAN OF FASHION.

THE figure of a brilliant, vivacious, and graceful woman of fashion, when we meet with it in the sober paths of history, acts as one of the lights in the picture. It is not only the sparkling point itself that charms the eye, but the depth of contrast with which it relieves the masses of shade, and clears up the misty vista. Crowds of human creatures, especially when they are dead and past, mass themselves up like trees, with an instinctive huddling together and interlacing of passions and interests. The loftier figures, which stand well apart from the throng, are too much raised above it, in most cases, to throw much light on anything but the upturned heads, the eyes of eager attention, hope, or despair, with which the multitude regards its masters. The statesmen, the great soldiers, the great poets, throw only such lights as this from above upon the expectant mass below them. But there are actors less splendid, who thread out and in through the obscure crowd, leaving

each a track among the nameless throng, by means of which we can distinguish the antique disused garments, the forgotten habits, the ancient forms of speech. Through the opening ranks it is a pleasure to watch the light soul tripping in airy old-fashioned measures to the quaint strains that are heard no longer—to observe the dim partners in its dance which it selects from the crowd—to see it clasping visionary hands, and exchanging shadowy embraces with the half-seen creatures upon whom it casts a little of its own light. That light may be but the glow-worm glitter of a bright conversational superficial soul—it may be only the shimmer of a court suit of cloth-of-gold—but we follow it with an interest which is often above its deserts; for so much as human instrumentality can, it opens the common ranks to us, and makes our ancestors visible, not in the grave shape of their wars and their politics, but in their form and fashion as they lived.

This office is not one which is specially reserved to women. Far different is the apparition of the heroic Maid or the patriot Queen. Women crowd closely upon the great highroad of the past. The unobtrusive domestic creature which is held up to us as the great model and type of the sex, could never be guessed at as its representative, did we form our ideas according to experience and evidence, instead of under the happy guidance of the conventional and imaginary. Every other kind and fashion of woman, except that correct and abstract being, is to be

found in history; women who are princes, heroines, martyrs, givers of good and of evil counsel, leaders of parties, makers of wars. Their robes mingle with the succincter garments of statesmen and soldiers round them, with an equality of position and interest such as no theory knows. Nor is the butterfly-woman any commoner than the man-butterfly in the world of fashion and gossip dead and gone. The example we choose is of the best kind of the species, a higher specimen than the twin-creature, Horace Walpole, for example, who occupies something like a similar rank in the unimpassioned chronicle. There are qualities in Lady Mary which are quite above the range of her brother gossip, and a human interest which transcends any claim of his; but yet the light which flashes out from her delicate lantern upon every scene through which she passes, and upon the voiceless, unluminous mass around her, is the kind of light to which we have just referred—not the illumination from above, but the level ray which goes in and out amid the crowd, and reveals everywhere, in the little spot of radiance round her figure, the thronging forms, the half-seen faces, the gestures and fashions, the cries and exclamations of a generation which is past.

Mary Wortley Montagu was born Mary Pierrepont, of noble family and many gifts—Lady Mary, softest and sweetest of all titles, from her birth—in the year 1690. We do not pretend that she ever came up to the ideal of her name; but the young creature was sweet and fair, as well as sprightly and full of life, in

the early days which she makes dimly apparent in her letters. The first incident in her story conveys a curious foretaste and prevision of her whole career. Her mother died when she was a child; and her father was one of those gay and easy men of pleasure who are the sternest and most immovable of domestic tyrants. He was very fond of her so long as she was a baby unable to cross his will—proud of her infant beauty and wit, and the first rays of an intelligence which was afterwards one of the keenest and brightest of her time. He was a Whig and a man of the highest fashion, and "of course belonged to the Kitcat Club." At one of the meetings of this "gay and gallant community," the object of which was "to choose toasts for the year," Lord Dorchester (such being his title at the time; he was afterwards Duke of Kingston) nominated his little daughter, aged eight, declaring that she was far prettier than any lady on their list. The other members of the Club objected that their rules forbade the election to such an honour of any unknown beauty, upon which ensued the following characteristic scene:—

"'Then you shall see her!' cried he; and, in the gaiety of the moment sent orders home to have her finely dressed and brought to him at the tavern, where she was received with acclamations, her claim unanimously allowed, her health drunk by every one present, and her name engraved in due form on a drinking-glass. The company consisting of some of the most eminent men in England, she went from the lap of one poet, or patriot, or statesman, to the arms of another, was feasted with sweetmeats, overwhelmed with caresses, and what, perhaps, already pleased her better than either, heard her wit and

beauty loudly extolled on every side. Pleasure, she said, was too poor a word to express her sentiments—they amounted to ecstasy; never again throughout her whole future life did she spend so happy a day. . . . Her father carried on the frolic, and, we may conclude, confirmed the taste, by having her portrait painted for the club-room, that she might be enrolled a regular toast."

This is the first appearance of the poor motherless child in the gay world she was to amuse and influence so long. After so ecstatic a glimpse of the triumphs which awaited her, she was sent back to the obscurity and seclusion which is the common fate of young-womanhood in the bud; but which, no doubt, after the above scene, was still more distasteful to the little beauty than it is in general to the captive princesses in their pinafores. There is a little controversy as to the mode of her education, of which her first polite biographer declares that "the first dawn of her genius opened so auspiciously that her father resolved to cultivate the advantages of nature by a sedulous attention to her early instruction. A classical education was not usually given to English ladies of quality when Lady Mary Pierrepont received one of the best," adds the courtly historian. "Under the same preceptors as Viscount Newark, her brother, she acquired the elements of the Greek, Latin, and French languages with the greatest success. When she had made a singular proficiency, her studies were superintended by Bishop Burnet, who fostered her superior talents with every expression of dignified praise." This is very fine language,

and there is a dignified consciousness throughout the narrative that its subject is a person of quality, and not to be spoken of in the vulgar tongue; but the fact is very doubtful, and seems to have had no greater foundation than the existence of a translation of the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus which Lady Mary executed in the ambition of her youth, and which Bishop Burnet corrected for her.

She describes herself in one of her youthful letters as living surrounded with dictionaries, and teaching herself the learned tongue which was so great a distinction to her in those days. "My own education was one of the worst in the world," she says, when writing to her daughter nearly half a century after, "being exactly like Clarissa Harlowe's; her pious Mrs Norton so perfectly resembling my governess, who had been nurse to my mother, I could almost fancy the author was acquainted with her. She took so much pains from my infancy to fill my head with superstitious tales and false notions, it was none of her fault that I am not at this day afraid of witches and hobgoblins, or turned Methodist." There were three girls brought up in this way in the family house at Thoresby, which, like all the country houses of the period, was a place of penance and suffering to the possessors. "Don't you remember how miserable we were in the little parlour at Thoresby?" Lady Mary writes to her sister Lady Mar, when they were both in full possession of the freedom of maturer life, though life had not turned out so triumph-

ant as the girls supposed. "We then thought marrying would put us at once into possession of all we wanted," she adds, no doubt with a sigh over the vain supposition. And yet the parlour at Thoresby cannot have been so very dull after all, and a pretty picture of girlish occupation might be made out of the few indications supplied by Lady Louisa Stuart in her introductory anecdotes to her grandmother's letters. "She possessed and left after her the whole library of Mrs Lennox's *Female Quixote, Cleopatra, Cassandra, Clelia, Cyprus, Pharamond, Ibrahim,* &c. &c., all, like the Lady Arabella's collection, 'Englished' mostly by persons of honour." In a blank page of one of these great folios "Lady Mary had written in her fairest youthful hand the names and characteristics of the chief personages, thus: 'The beautiful Diana, the volatile Climene, the melancholy Doris, Celadon the faithful, Adamas the wise,' and so on,"—a pretty piece of girlish enthusiasm which everybody who has had to do with such budding creatures will appreciate. She "got by heart all the poetry that came in her way, and indulged herself in the luxury of reading every romance as yet invented," a custom which stood her in great stead in after-life, and at the same time did not prevent the translation of Epictetus, nor the perusal apparently of many grave authors. Besides all these labours and recreations, the girl, as she grew up, had the duties of the mistress of the house laid on her shoulders — no small matter in those days. No *dîner Russe,* blessed

modern invention, had then been thought of. Poor Lady Mary had to take lessons three times a-week from "a professed carving-master, who taught the art scientifically," in order to be prepared for her father's "public days;" and on these public days ate her own dinner alone before the laborious social meal came on, to be fortified for its duties.

"Each joint was carried up in its turn to be operated upon by her, and by her alone, since the peers and knights on either hand were so far from being bound to offer their assistance that the very master of the house, posted opposite to her, might not act as her croupier; his department was to push the bottle after dinner. As for the crowd of guests, the most inconsiderable among them—the curate, or subaltern, or squire's younger brother—if suffered through her neglect to help himself to a slice of mutton placed before him, would have chewed it in bitterness, and gone home an affronted man, half inclined to give a wrong vote at the next election."

Hot from such tedious and trying labours, no wonder the girl was glad to take refuge in the Grand Cyrus, or bury her anatomical woes in Latin, whether that Latin was acquired legitimately under her brother's tutor or by private efforts of her own.

When Lady Mary was twenty she sent her translation of Epictetus to Bishop Burnet, with a letter in which the charming unconscious pedantry of youth breaks out in curious contrast with the light and not particularly refined epistles which at the same period she was writing to her youthful friends. It was "the work of one week of my solitude," she says; and with simple artfulness begs her correspondent to believe that her sole object in sending it to him was

"to ask your lordship whether I have understood Epictetus?" "My sex is usually forbid studies of this nature," adds the girl, with the oft-repeated plaint of womankind. "We are taught to place all our art in adorning our outward forms, and permitted without reproach to carry that custom even to extravagancy, while our minds are entirely neglected, and, by disuse of reflection, filled with nothing but the trifling objects our eyes are daily entertained with. This custom, so long established and industriously upheld, makes it even ridiculous to go out of the common road, and forces one to find as many excuses as if it were a thing altogether criminal not to play the fool in concert with other women of quality." The young lady goes on to give her reverend counsellor a curious sketch of the manner in which "any man of sense that finds it either his interest or his pleasure" can corrupt women of quality, in consequence of their careless education,—a matter which Lady Mary and everybody belonging to her evidently thinks a quite natural and edifying subject for discussion on the part of a young woman just out of her teens; and the letter is concluded by a long Latin quotation from Erasmus. But for that one wonderful touch about the man of sense and the women of quality, the letter is amusingly natural in its artificialness and eager strain after the calm of learning. It is the only bit of pedantry in the collection. Lady Mary and her descendants to the fourth and fifth generation evidently bear a modest

consciousness that this *Enchiridion* is a feather in the family cap.

But she had other things on her hands than translations. Among her friends one of the best-beloved was a certain Mistress Anne Wortley, whose acquaintance was to determine Lady Mary's life. Mrs Anne had a brother, young, handsome, and promising—a young man of family and fashion. This hero of the tale was in general, we are told, superior to female society. His granddaughter is indignant at the idea that Mr Edward Wortley was "a dull, phlegmatic, country gentleman, of a tame genius and moderate capacity, of parts more solid than brilliant," as has been unkindly said. But the fact is, that the impression to be derived of Lady Mary's husband from the sole record in which he figures—that in which his wife stands out so clear and crisp and vivid—is of the vaguest and faintest character. He is as indistinct as the hero in a lady's novel. Certain general ideas of truth, straightforwardness, sternness, &c., are shadowed forth in him; but as to individuality, the man does not possess such a thing, either from the fault of the writer—which is scarcely to be supposed—or from his own. This dim being was, however, young when the two met. He was, we are told, "a first-rate scholar." "Polite literature was his passion." He was the friend of Addison, and formed part of the brilliant society which encircled that delicate wit. With all this prestige surrounding him, and clothed with that indefiniteness of youth which it is so easy

to suppose full of hope and promise, no doubt he was a striking apparition in the eyes of the girl who chafed at her own ignorance, and courted the approach of genius. Few things have ever proved more charming to the feminine imagination in youth, than that lordly superiority which, alas! so seldom stands a closer examination. Female education, Lady Louisa Stuart informs us, was at so low an ebb, "that Mr Wortley, however fond of his sister, could have no particular motive to seek the acquaintance of her companions." But yet Fate beguiled the young hero, notwithstanding the debasement of womankind, and his own lofty sense of a higher being. This was how his downfall befell:—

"His surprise and delight were all the greater when, one afternoon, having by chance loitered in her apartment till visitors arrived, he saw Lady Mary Pierrepont for the first time; and on entering into conversation with her, found, in addition to beauty that charmed him, not only brilliant wit, but a thinking and cultivated mind. He was especially struck with the discovery that she understood Latin, and could relish his beloved classics. Something that passed led to the mention of Quintus Curtius, which she said she had never read. This was a fair handle for a piece of gallantry. In a few days she received a superb edition of the author, with these lines facing the title-page:—

"'Beauty like this had vanquished Persia shown,
The Macedon had laid his empire down,
And polished Greece obeyed a barbarous throne.
Had wit so bright adorned a Grecian dame,
The amorous youth had lost his thirst for fame,
Nor distant India sought through Syria's plain;
But to the Muses' stream with her had run,
And thought her lover more than Ammon's son.'"

So changed have manners become since those days,

that the nearest analogy to this curious beginning of courtship must be looked for among our housemaids and the faithful youths who "keep company" with them. But we suppose it was all right in 1710, or anyhow Lady Mary had no mamma to do what was proper, and send back the premature offering. Perhaps it was the first time that Quintus Curtius had served such a purpose. The correspondence was carried on for some time by means of Mistress Anne, who is suspected of having sent her brother's fervid communications under her own name to her dear Lady Mary. Very soon, however, poor Mistress Anne died in the bloom of her beauty and youth; and the two, who were by this time, in their way, lovers, had to carry on their traffic directly, without any intermediary. Then the character of the correspondence changed. We cannot but suspect that the lover must have been something of a prig. He who began his wooing by means of Quintus Curtius soon found out that though he was in love he did not approve of himself for it; nor did he at all approve of her, the cause of his unsuitable passion. He loved her because he could not help it; against his will. His taste and his heart might be satisfied, but the same could not be said for his judgment. His letters are (again) like those of the superior hero of a novel, bound to the frivolous, flighty, beautiful creature whom he doubts and disapproves of, but cannot tear himself away from. Nor was this all. When he had at last screwed his courage to the point of

a proposal, other obstacles came in the way. Mr Wortley was a theorist, a *doctrinaire*, a man of opinions. He was opposed, like the *Spectator* and *Tatler*, to the laws of entail. Indeed, his historian insinuates that on this point it must have been he who inspired Steele and Addison, neither of these worthies having anything to entail—a true piece of characteristic contempt for the mere professional writer, worthy of a person of quality. But Lord Dorchester did not appreciate Mr Wortley's fine sentiments. When every argument had failed to convince the philosophical lover, the treaty came to an end, and poor Lady Mary, the only one of the parties concerned in whom the reader feels any interest, was peremptorily condemned, after all the pretty preliminaries of her quaint courtship, to forget her *doctrinaire* and accept another suitor. The girl resisted, but in vain. She begged to be but left alone —to be allowed to give up both wooers, and remain in her father's house—but without success. The few letters to her friends which are preserved belonging to this period of her life are not more refined than the age; but her conduct at this crisis is decidedly more refined and delicate than was to be expected in the beginning of the eighteenth century. It is true she kept up a private correspondence with the philosophical Wortley, and finally ran away with him; but her letters are free from every taint of coarseness, and full of modest and womanly sentiment, scarcely to be looked for in the circumstances.

A more curious correspondence between lovers was never given to the world. On his side there is no doubt a certain glow of restrained passion kept in curb by an almost dislike, a sense of superiority and unsuitability, which becomes comical in its seriousness. On hers there is no passion. She is grateful for the love by which she has been distinguished from a man whom, in her girlish humility, she is ready to take at his own estimate, and consider as superior as he believes himself to be. No doubt Quintus Curtius and the classics, and the flattering sense that it was her own superiority to most women which had determined his choice of her, had dazzled the young creature. She is affectionate, and humble in her affection; puzzled, but anxious to do what will please him, if only he will be candid, and let her know what he is aiming at. It is a virgin soul which speaks, unmoved by any fiery inspiration of love, tenderly unimpassioned, willing to be his wife, most unwilling to be the wife of another man. Perhaps this calm but anxious condition of mind might be disappointing to a fervent lover—but it is a pretty attitude for the young soul, and one which charms the spectator. Mary Pierrepont looks a very different creature from Mary Wortley Montagu. She is standing on the brink of the transition when the following letters pass between her and her lover. The first which we shall quote refers apparently to his first proposal:—

"Give me leave to say it (I know it sounds vain)," writes the

spirited and sensible girl, with a mingling of indignation in her candour, "I know how to make a man of sense happy; but then that man must resolve to contribute something towards it himself. I have so much esteem for you, I should be very sorry to hear that you were unhappy, but for the world I would not be the instrument of making you so; which, in the humour you are, is hardly to be avoided, if I am your wife. You distrust me—I can neither be easy nor loved when I am distrusted. Nor do I believe your passion for me is what you pretend it—at least I am sure, were I in love, I could not talk as you do. Few women would have wrote so plain as I have done, but to dissemble is among the things I never do. I take more pains to approve my conduct to myself than to the world, and would not have to accuse myself of a minute's deceit. I wish I loved you enough to devote myself to be for ever miserable for the pleasure of a day or two's happiness. I cannot resolve upon it. You must think otherwise of me, or not at all. I don't enjoin you to burn this letter—I know you will. 'Tis the first I ever wrote to one of your sex, and shall be the last. You may never expect another. I resolve against all correspondence of the kind—my resolutions are seldom made, and never broken——"

Notwithstanding this very determined conclusion, the same day, or perhaps the next morning, throws new lights on the lover's letter which had drawn from her this spirited reply; and, forgetting her resolve, Lady Mary puts pen to paper once more, to repeat and strengthen, in a womanish way which has not yet gone out of fashion, the answer which she had already given, and which was decisive enough.

"Reading over your letter as fast as ever I could," she recommences abruptly, "and answering it with the same ridiculous precipitation, I find one part of it escaped my sight and the other I mistook in several places. . . . Your letter is to tell me you should think yourself undone if you married me; but if I could be so tender as to confess I should break my

heart if you did not, then you would consider whether you would or no; but yet you hoped you should not. I take this to be the right interpretation of——'even your kindness can't destroy me of a sudden. I hope I am not in your power. I would give a good deal to be satisfied, &c.' . . . You would have me say that I am violently in love; that is, finding you think better of me than you desire, you would have me give you a just cause to contemn me. I doubt much whether there is a creature in the world humble enough to do that. I should not think you more unreasonable if you were in love with my face, and asked me to disfigure it to make you easy. I have heard of some nuns who made use of this expedient to secure their own happiness; but amongst all the Popish saints and martyrs I never read of one whose charity was sublime enough to make themselves deformed or ridiculous to restore their lovers to peace and quietness."

Perhaps the young man who received these letters was wise enough to see that the smart of wounded pride in them was too sharp to be compatible with absolute indifference; at least he seems to have taken them as no decisive answer, and to have pursued his suit in a way which clearly points him out as the original type of many gentlemen who have since enlightened and entertained the world, from Mr Rochester and Felix Holt down to the detestable prigs of American fiction—gentlemen who carry on their wooing by a series of insults and lectures. Mary Pierrepont was not a meek heroine, but still she seems to have yielded in some degree to the tantalising power of this strange kind of wooing. She struggles, she resists, she breaks out into little appeals; she restates her case, sometimes indignantly, sometimes half tenderly, and bids him farewell over and over again.

But perhaps the lady doth protest too much. It is evident that she had no desire to terminate the correspondence, which must have been an exciting break to the dulness of the Thoresby parlour. "While I foolishly fancied you loved me," she cries—brought up to this pitch, it is apparent, by much aggravation —"there is no condition of life I could not have been happy in with you, so very much I liked you — I might say loved, since it is the last thing I'll ever say to you. This is telling you sincerely my greatest weakness; and now I will oblige you with a new proof of generosity—I'll never see you more. I shall avoid *all* public places, and this is the last letter I shall send. If you write, be not displeased that I send it back unopened. I shall force my inclinations to oblige yours; and remember that you have told me I could not oblige you more than by refusing you." The next page, however, shows a change of sentiment. There is no longer question of a last letter, an eternal separation; on the contrary, she discusses calmly her own character and his mistaken estimate of it, and even goes into such a matter of detail as the comparative excellences of life in the country and life in town. "You think if you married me I should be passionately fond of you one month, and of somebody else the next," she says; "but neither would happen. I can esteem, I can be a friend, but I don't know whether I can love. Expect all that is complaisant and easy, but never what is fond in me. . . . When people are tied for life,"

the young philosopher goes on discussing the disadvantages of retirement, which her lover seems to have proposed, "'tis their mutual interest not to grow weary of one another. If I had all the personal charms I want, a face is too slight a foundation for happiness. You would be soon tired of seeing every day the same thing. When you saw nothing else, you would have leisure to remark all the defects, which would increase in proportion as the novelty lessened, which is always a great charm."

This composed state of mind, however, does not last long. Next time she writes it is again with the determination of saying farewell for ever.

"I begin to be tired of my humility," she exclaims. "I have carried my complaisances to you farther than I ought. You make new scruples, you have a great deal of fancy, and your distrusts being all of your own making, are more immovable than if there were some real ground for them. Our aunts and grandmothers always tell us that men are a sort of animals that, if ever they are constant, 'tis only when they are ill-used. 'Twas a kind of paradox I never could believe. Experience has taught me the truth of it. You are the first I ever had a correspondence with, and I thank God I have done with it for all my life. . . . I have not the spirits to dispute any longer with you. You say you are not determined; let me determine for you, and save you the trouble of writing again. Adieu for ever! Make no answer. I wish, among the variety of your acquaintance, you may find some one to please you, and can't help the vanity of thinking, should you try them all, you won't find one that will be so sincere in their treatment, though a thousand more deserving, and every one happier."

Then it is the lover who comes in, tantalising and tantalised :—

"Every time I see you," writes Mr Wortley, on his side, "gives me a fresh proof of your not caring for me; yet I beg you will meet me once more. How could you pay me that great compliment of loving the country for life, when you would not stay with me a few minutes longer? Who is the happy man you went to? I agree with you, I am often so dull I cannot explain my meaning, but will not own the expression was so very obscure when I said if I had you I should act against my opinion. Why need I add, I see what is best for me? I contemn what I do, and yet I fear I must do it. If you can't find it out that you are going to be unhappy, ask your sister, who agrees with you in everything else, and she will convince you of your rashness in this. She knows you don't care for me, and that you will like me less and less every year, perhaps every day of your life. You may with a little care please another as well, and make him less timorous. It is possible I too may please some of those that have but little acquaintance; and if I should be preferred by a woman for being the first among her companions, it would give me as much pleasure as if I were the first man in the world. Think again, and prevent a misfortune from falling upon both of us."

This letter concludes with instructions how they are to meet in the house of Steele by aid of his wife. And so the duel goes on. It is like the scene in Molière, which he repeats in several of his comedies, between offended lovers. No doubt the great dramatist repeated it because the quarrel of the two, their fury, their eternal farewell, their stolen looks, their relenting, and the sudden leap into each other's grasp of their eager reluctant hands, was such a piece of pretty fooling as no audience could resist. And here, in real English flesh and blood, in laced coat and quilted petticoat, in peruke and powder, stand Doris and Dorimène, performing their charming interlude.

By-and-by matters become more serious. The formal negotiations are broken off, and there is the other lover, who offers £500 a-year of pin-money and a house in town, and on whose behalf Lord Dorchester lays out £400 in wedding-clothes. Things come to such a pitch at last that there is nothing for it but "a coach to be at the door early Monday morning," and an entire surrender into the hands of the honourable if aggravating bridegroom. "I tremble for what we are doing," the girl writes, in a fright, on the evening of the Friday before this momentous day. "Are you sure you shall love me for ever? Shall we never separate? I fear and I hope—I foresee all that will happen. I shall incense my family in the highest degree. The generality of the world will blame my conduct, and the relations and friends of —— will invent a thousand stories of me; yet 'tis possible you may recompense everything to me. In this letter, which I am fond of, you promise me all I wish. Since I writ so far I received your Friday letter. I will be only yours, and I will do what you please."

And accordingly "early Monday morning" they ran away.

It is the pleasant privilege of fiction to end here. In such a case where could there be found a more charming, graceful story? People who had spoken their minds so freely to each other before their marriage, whose love had been tried by so many frets, and one of whom at last concluded the matter in such beautiful dispositions, what could they do but

live happy ever after? "I will be only yours, and I will do what you please." What prettier ending could close the youthful tender tale? Alas! the story of this Lady Mary did not end with these words, but only began.

There is something humbling and disappointing in dropping down to the calm level of ordinary life, after that moment of exalted sentiment and idealism. The happiest and the least pretentious marriage shares this revulsion with the most showy and the most unfortunate. After that strain of passionate feeling, that sense of new life beginning, those noble resolutions and beautiful dreams, to wake and find after all that the obstinate earth is still the same, that the still more obstinate self is unchanged, and that life falls back into its accustomed channel, taking incredibly little heed of that one alteration of circumstances which, before it was made, seemed so radical and overwhelming, is hard upon any susceptible imagination. Neither bride nor bridegroom in the case before us seems to have entertained any high-flown expectations; but yet it is not very long before Lady Mary begins to feel that a careless husband is a much less piquant and amusing interlocutor than a disapproving lover. It is evident that she spent a great part of the first few years of her married life alone. She writes to the errant husband, at first with pleasant expressions of her happiness, but afterwards with alternations of petulance and melancholy, and repentance for both. "I assist every day at public

prayers in this family," she says in what it is evident is her first letter, a month or two after the marriage, when her heart is soft with unaccustomed happiness, and moved, in consequence, to a superficial religiousness,—"and never forget in my private ejaculations how much I owe to heaven for making me yours."

This blessed state of affairs, however, does not last very long. Within the first year a pensive sense of loneliness comes over the young wife; she does not complain, but she wonders at his absence and his silence; now and then she is sick and sad, and moralises: "Life itself, to make it supportable, should not be considered too nearly," she says. "It is a maxim with me to be young (the poor soul was three-and-twenty!) as long as one can; there is nothing can pay one for that invaluable ignorance which is the companion of youth; those sanguine groundless hopes, and that lively vanity which makes all the happiness of life. To my extreme mortification, I grow wiser every day." A little later she calls her fortitude to her, and is obstinately contented. "I discovered an old trunk of papers," she writes from the solitude of Hinchinbroke, "which to my great diversion I found to be the letters of the first Earl of Sandwich. . . . I walked yesterday two hours on the terrace—these are the most considerable events that have happened in your absence, excepting that a good-natured robin-redbreast kept me company almost the whole afternoon with so much good-humour and humanity as gives me faith for the piece of charity ascribed to

these little creatures in the *Children in the Wood.*" Some time after this she becomes indignant: "I am alone, without any amusement to take up my thoughts; I am in circumstances in which melancholy is apt to prevail even over all amusements, dispirited and alone, and you write me quarrelling letters. . . . Should I tell you that I am uneasy, that I am out of humour and out of patience, should I see you half an hour the sooner?——" . . . and then the poor young creature is penitent, and excuses herself for complaining. The bright, beautiful, high-spirited young woman, removing from one doleful country house to another, estranged from all her natural friends, bearing all the physical ills natural in the circumstances, consuming her heart in enforced solitude, while the curmudgeon of a husband, the cause of all her troubles, amuses himself in the great world, and writes her, when he writes at all, "quarrelling letters," are set forth before us with the greatest distinctness. Poor Lady Mary had, apparently, no high religious or any other kind of principle to support her. She was not a woman of the noblest kind, nor is her character a model one in any way: yet her courage, and spirit, and patience; her eagerness to make the best of everything; the comfort she takes in the kind robin and the old letters; her endurance; her fancies; her occasional little outbursts, make up a picture at once pretty and affecting. Had she been less reasonable and more passionate, the story of what was evidently an unsuitable and uncomfort-

able marriage would no doubt have been more dramatic. But the age was one in which people were very composed in their affections; and she, it is apparent from first to last, was an eminently unimpassioned woman. But that she was chilled, wounded, mortified, lowered in her own estimation, and cut short in all possible blossoming of her affections, is clear enough. We wonder, if the story had been traced after marriage of all our modern heroes whose *rôle* it is to scold and find fault, like Mr Wortley, whether a similar result might not be perceptible? The consequence in this case to all readers will be a hearty pity and liking for Lady Mary, and a wholesome contempt for the narrow pedant whom, by bad luck, she had made the controller of her heart and fate.

Matters had come to such a pass between the two who, by a runaway marriage, had given what is generally supposed the strongest evidence of love, within two years after, that the young wife was moved to formal remonstrance.

"I cannot forbear any longer telling you," she writes, "I think you use me very unkindly. I don't say so much of your absence as I should do if you was in the country and I in London, because I would not have you believe that I am impatient to be in town when I say I am impatient to be with you; but I am very sensible I parted with you in July, and 'tis now the middle of November. As if this was not hardship enough, you do not tell me you are sorry for it. You write seldom, and with so much indifference as shows you hardly think of me at all. I complain of ill-health, and you only say you hope it is not so bad as I make it. You never inquire

after your child. . . . You should consider solitude, and spleen the consequence of solitude, is apt to give the most melancholy ideas, and thus needs at least tender letters and kind expressions to hinder uneasiness almost inseparable from absence. I am very sensible how far I ought to be contented when your affairs oblige you to be without me. I would not have you do yourself any prejudice, but a little kindness will cost you nothing. . . . I have concealed as long as I can the uneasiness the nothingness of your letters have given me under an affected indifference; but dissimulation always sits awkwardly upon me. I am weary of it, and must beg of you to write me no more if you cannot bring yourself to write otherwise. Multiplicity of business or diversions may have engaged you, but all people find time to do what they have a mind to. If your inclination is gone, I had rather never receive a letter from you than one which in lieu of comfort for your absence gives me a pain even beyond it."

Notwithstanding all this, no sooner does the political horizon change, and an opening become visible for Wortley, if he can avail himself of it, in public life, than his wife springs eager to his side to encourage and stimulate him. And very strange to be uttered by a young woman of four-and-twenty, from the depths of rustic quiet, do her exhortations sound. The period is just after the accession of George I. —a new reign, a new era—when all the possibilities of power and influence lay before any new man who had force enough to seize them. Probably Lady Mary's faith in her husband's superiority had begun to fail, and, in consequence, she is great on the merits of boldness in opposition to modesty, which she evidently tries to persuade herself is all he wants to insure success. Here is the opening note of the trum-

pet with which, in mingled flattery and menace, she attempts to stir him up :—

"Though I am very impatient to see you, I would not have you, by hastening to come down, lose any part of your interest. . . . I am glad you think of serving your friends. I hope it will put you in mind of serving yourself. I need not enlarge upon the advantages of money—everything we see and everything we hear puts us in remembrance of it. If it were possible to restore liberty to your country, or limit the encroachments of the prerogative, by reducing yourself to a garret, I should be pleased to share so glorious a poverty with you; but as the world is and will be, 'tis a sort of duty to be rich that it may be in one's power to do good—riches being another word for power, towards the obtaining of which the first necessary qualification is impudence, and (as Demosthenes said of pronunciation in oratory) the second is impudence, and the third still impudence. No modest man ever did or ever will make his fortune. Your friend Lord Halifax, R. Walpole, and all other remarkable instances of quick advancement, have been remarkably impudent. The Ministry is like a play at Court: there's a little door to get in, and a great crowd without, shoving and thrusting who shall be foremost: people who knock others with their elbows, disregard a little kick of the shins, and still thrust heartily forward, are sure of a good place. Your modest man stands behind in the crowd, is shoved about by everybody, his clothes torn, almost squeezed to death, and sees a thousand get in before him that don't make so good a figure as himself. I don't say it is impossible for an impudent man not to rise in the world; but a modest merit, with a large share of impudence, is more probable to be advanced than the greatest qualifications without it. If this letter is impertinent, it is founded upon an opinion of your merit, which, if it is a mistake, I would not be undeceived. It is my interest to believe, as I do, that you deserve everything, and are capable of everything; but nobody else will believe it if they see you get nothing."

Whether by means of the noble quality of impudence thus strenuously recommended to him, or by his relationship to Montagu Earl of Halifax, Mr Wortley got into office, and was for some time a Lord of the Treasury; the principal use of his advancement, so far as the public was concerned, being, that his sprightly and beautiful wife could no longer be kept in banishment. Lady Louisa Stuart informs us that Lady Mary became a favourite in both of the royal households. The Prince of Wales is said to have "admired her rather more than the Princess, though not usually jealous, could approve. Once in a rapture he called her Royal Highness from the card-table to look how becomingly Lady Mary was dressed. 'Lady Mary always dresses well,' said the Princess dryly, and returned to her cards." This anecdote, which is taken from the diary destroyed by Lady Bute, Lady Mary's only daughter, does not look particularly true; for, if we may credit other descriptions of her, and her own expression of her tastes not many years before, dress was never her *forte*, nor is she mentioned in any other description of the Princess's Court. The other old Court at St James's, where King George the First with dulness and the Duchess of Kendal presided over the tedious circle, was enlivened by the triumphant young beauty. She was so popular there, that Secretary Craggs, meeting her on her way out, and hearing that her early departure was much regretted by his Majesty, loyally snatched her up in his arms and carried her

back again to the royal presence, that his master might have his will.

After two years of this gay life, Mr Wortley was appointed ambassador to Constantinople, a mission upon which his wife with her baby—the precious only son of whom in his infancy she writes with so much tenderness, and who in his manhood brought her both shame and grief—accompanied him. She seems to have accepted this splendid banishment with the liveliest satisfaction and excitement. Change, adventure, movement, new things to see and hear and find out—everything her brilliant and curious intelligence required—were thus supplied to her; and there never had been so clear a picture of the mysterious East as that which the gay young English ambassadress sent thereafter in long letters sparkling with wit and observation and real insight to all her English friends. She found, as other travellers have found since, that no previous authority was in the least reliable, and that all the ordinary commonplaces of Western belief about the Orientals were at once false and foolish. In the warmth of her enthusiasm for the new world which she must have felt she had discovered, she set forth the favourable side of all its institutions—found its women the freest of the free, notwithstanding their supposed slavery; its men the most faithful, its religion the most pure, and its scenery the most lovely. Perhaps her own freedom in the intoxicating novelty of the new position had something to do with it. Her child throve not-

withstanding the terrible journey across the Hungarian wilds—her husband probably was occupied, and did not oppress her with his company. She adopted the dress of the country, and, light-hearted as a child in "my *ferigée* and *asmásk*," she says, "I ramble every day about Constantinople and amuse myself with seeing all that is curious in it." To the bazaars, the baths, the mosques, everywhere where a veiled woman could penetrate, or an ambassadress command entrance, the sprightly observer roves. And she sees everything through rose-coloured spectacles. Her letters glow with descriptions of the beauty of the women, given with a freedom which only a woman could use (and be it said by the-way, there are no such admirers as women of beauty in the abstract, whether the current sneer about their jealousy of individual instances be worth more than other popular fictions or no), their polished skins, their dazzling jewels, their glorious hair, their tissues of gold and silver. Nothing escapes those bright eyes which already more than one poet had sung. One moment it is an embroidered napkin, at another a long Latin inscription, which attracts her notice and fills her letter. From the presence-chamber of the lovely Sultana Fatima, she flies by a natural transition to Turkish poetry and the romance of the Rose and Nightingale, and from thence to St Sophia and to the monastery of the dervishes with its weird worship. She makes merry over the extraordinary commissions sent to her—as, for instance, that of

purchasing a Greek slave, which Pope playfully and by way of flattery, but one good woman among her correspondents gravely and in good faith, requests her to do—and laughingly describes the terrible consequences to her own beautiful face of a certain balm, of which the English ladies had heard as an unfailing cosmetic. She tells how, at the bath, being requested to undress like the others, she silenced all cavillers by showing her stays, which they immediately concluded to be a machine holding her fast, of which her husband kept the key, and considered a very natural and reasonable arrangement. She describes her long theological conversations with a certain Effendi, in whose house she and her husband were lodged, and his amiable intellectual scepticism. She has information for each of her correspondents—the poem for Pope, the Sultanas for her sister, the religious discussions for her abbé—who must have been a most tolerant Catholic. She is even so good-natured as to describe a camel to some good rural gentlewoman. Altogether, there never was a more spontaneous, sprightly, and picturesque narrative of travel than this, which the light-hearted young woman with bright English eyes, which noted everything under her flowing Eastern veil, despatched to the little knot of men and women who followed her wanderings with the interest of friends. The country was all new and strange, the observer all life, vivacity, and intelligence. Under such conditions, the most uninteresting land grows curious and full of wealth.

Among the letters which contain these sparkling sketches, appear certain epistles from Pope—strange preliminaries to the deadly war of words which afterwards raged between the two. They must have made acquaintance in the short interval of town life which Lady Mary passed in London before her husband became ambassador. We will not here discuss the poet's style in letter-writing; but it is curious to contrast these elaborate compositions with the pleasant freedom of the answers to them, and of the general correspondence in which they are enclosed. There is an artificial solemnity in the adoration with which Pope approaches the lady of his dreams, which already shadows forth the half-authenticated scene in the Twickenham garden, where the unhappy little man spoke out his passion, and the brilliant beauty was surprised into a peal of laughter—laughter never to be forgiven. But the comparison is not in favour of the man of genius; the woman's letters are incomparably fresher, brighter, more natural and easy than his. She puts his stilted rhapsodies aside with an unconsciousness which doubtless was in some degree assumed, and does her best to tone down his extravagance with a serene friendliness which is full of charm. There is all the difference between them that there is between a manufactured article and a spontaneous natural production. Lady Mary, no doubt, like all the letter-writers of her period, preserved and cherished her letters as things interesting to the world in gen-

eral; but there is no sense of this fact underlying their graceful strain. The first and immediate purpose of telling her story happily shuts out from her eyes the cold shade of posterity listening in the background. They are not the effusions of an author to the world, but the spontaneous communications—whatever may happen to them afterwards —of a woman to her friends.

Let us quote, in passing, her description of the French ladies whom, fresh from the polished limbs and majestic bearing of her Turkish friends, she sees in Paris on her way home. It is an amusing contribution to the history of Fashion, and shows against what perpetual ingratitude from a disdainful world the disciples of that goddess, especially in Paris, her metropolis, have long and bravely struggled.

"I must tell you something of the French ladies," she writes. "I have seen all the beauties, . . . such nauseous creatures! so fantastically absurd in their dress! so monstrously unnatural in their paints! their hair cut short and curled round their faces, and so loaded with powder that it makes it look like white wool! and on their cheeks to their chins, unmercifully laid on a shining red japan, that glistens in a most flaming manner, so that they seem to have no resemblance to human faces. . . . 'Tis with pleasure I recollect my dear pretty countrywomen; if I was writing to anybody else, I should say that these grotesque daubers give me still a higher esteem of the natural charms of dear Lady Rich's auburn hair, and the lively colours of her unsullied complexion."

Mr Wortley's embassy lasted not much more than a year; and within two years his family, increased by a daughter, afterwards Lady Bute, who had been

born in Constantinople, was again in England. But during that short time Lady Mary had managed not only to collect all the curious information embodied in her letters, and to learn — enough, at least, to enable her to translate—the Turkish language, but had acquired knowledge of a more serious kind, which only a woman of high courage and spirit, rising almost to the height of heroism, would have had the boldness to act upon. She found the system of inoculation for smallpox to be in universal practice around her, and, emboldened by the fact that she had already passed through that dreadful disease (with the loss of her eyelashes, which, it is said, made her brilliant eyes look fierce), Lady Mary, with enlightened curiosity, examined into it. She describes it thus to one of her correspondents:—

"Apropos of distempers, I am going to tell you a thing that will make you wish yourself here. The smallpox, so fatal and so general among us, is here entirely harmless, by the invention of *ingrafting*, which is the term they give it. There is a set of old women who make it their business to perform the operation every autumn, in the month of September, when the great heat is abated. People send to one another to know if any of their family has a mind to have the smallpox: they make parties for this purpose, and when they are met, commonly fifteen or sixteen together, the old woman comes with a nutshell full of the matter of the best sort of smallpoxes, and asks what vein you please to have opened. . . . The children or young patients play together all the rest of the day, and are in perfect health to the eighth. Then the fever begins to seize them, and they keep their beds two days, very seldom three. They have very rarely above twenty or thirty in their faces, which never mark; and in eight days they are as well as before their illness. . . .

Every year thousands undergo this operation; and the French ambassador says pleasantly that they take the smallpox here by way of diversion, as they take the waters in other countries. There is no example of any one that has died in it; and you may believe I am well satisfied of the safety of this experiment since I intend to try it on my dear little son. I am patriot enough to take pains to bring this useful invention into fashion in England."

This information was acquired, and the resolution formed, very shortly after Lady Mary's arrival in Turkey. With heroic courage she tested it upon her boy, who came through the trial successfully; and when the Turkish ambassador's pretty wife came back to England, it was not as a mere wit and beauty, strong as were her claims to both distinctions, but with a "mission" such as few young women of fashion would have had the courage to take up. She had already declared her total want of confidence in doctors, and certainly that "that distemper is too beneficial to them not to expose to all their resentment the hardy wight that should attempt to put an end to it." Inoculation has been so entirely superseded that a critic of the present day, unless possessed of special medical knowledge, does not even know the extent of its use, or what amount of good it did. But there can be no doubt about the disinterested regard for her fellow-creatures, and dauntless spirit which inspired this young mother, and kept her up in the struggle which her granddaughter describes as follows:—

"What an arduous, what a fearful, and, we may add, what a

thankless enterprise it was, nobody is now in the least aware. Those who have heard her applauded for it ever since they were born, and have also seen how joyfully vaccination was welcomed in their own days, may naturally conclude that, when once the experiment had been made and proved successful, she would have nothing to do but to sit down triumphant, and receive the thanks and blessings of her countrymen. . . . Lady Mary protested that, in the four or five years immediately succeeding her arrival at home, she seldom passed a day without repenting of her patriotic undertaking; and she vowed that she would never have attempted it if she had foreseen the vexation, the persecution, and even the obloquy, it brought upon her. The clamours raised against the practice, and of course against her, were beyond belief. The faculty all rose in arms to a man, foretelling failure and the most disastrous consequences; the clergy descanted from their pulpits on the impiety of thus seeking to take events out of the hand of Providence; the common people were taught to hoot at her as an unnatural mother who had risked the lives of her own children. And notwithstanding that she soon gained many supporters amongst the higher and more enlightened classes, headed by the Princess of Wales (Queen Caroline), who stood by her firmly, some even of her acquaintance were weak enough to join in the outcry. We now read in grave medical biography that the discovery was instantly hailed, and the method adopted by the principal members of that profession. . . . But what said Lady Mary of the actual fact and time? Why, that the four great physicians deputed by Government to watch the progress of her daughter's inoculation, betrayed not only such incredulity as to its success, but such an unwillingness to have it succeed, such an evident spirit of rancour and malignity, that she never cared to leave the child alone with them one second lest it should in some secret way suffer from their interference. Lady Bute herself could partly confirm her mother's account by her own testimony, for afterwards the battle was often fought in her presence. As inoculation gained ground, all who could make or claim the slightest acquaintance with Lady Mary Wortley used to beg for her advice and superintendence while it was going on in

their families; and she constantly carried her little daughter along with her to the house, and into the sick-room, to prove her security from infection."

Women are getting such very hard measure in these days, that a little incident like this is worth recording in favour of the maligned section of humanity. Bad as they may be to-day, they are not so bad as they were in that unclean age. Yet this very striking instance of enlightened observation and the highest public spirit is entirely to be attributed to those mothers whose education, according to the common theory, made them unfit to be their husbands' companions or the instructors of their children. Fancy Mr Wortley taking any trouble to introduce a custom which only saved other people's lives and did himself no immediate advantage! or little George, the second of that blessed name, standing by him in his undertaking! Lady Mary did it, having at once the eye to see, and the heart to dare; and princely Caroline stood by her, with the same breadth of perception, and steady valour of soul. It is not to be expected that any such fact, however picturesque, should for a moment stand before the force of theory, but still the story is remarkable in its way.

Lady Mary remained in England after her return from Constantinople for twenty-one years, during which, no doubt, the most important events of her life took place, though they are not those in which we know her best. She was at home, and consequently, except to her sister, the wife of the banished

Earl of Mar, she wrote but few letters. Whatever cause there might be for the clouds that have rested on her good name arose during this period. She quarrelled with Pope, and was assailed by him with a pitiless spite and venom which goes far to defeat itself; she lived and shone in London, and enjoyed the social life and triumphs for which her wit and talent so well qualified her, and doubtless did some equivocal things which her biographer is not sorry to have no very distinct particulars of. The quarrel with Pope is, like other incidents of this part of her life, left in much uncertainty. What is quite clear is, that he wrote to her while she was in Turkey frequent letters full of fantastical and elaborate adulation, just warmed with a flicker of real feeling—that he entreated her on his knees, metaphorically speaking, to go to Twickenham, where, apparently in consequence of his arguments, and to recruit the travellers after their journey, Mr Wortley took a house. Some time after, the poet, without a word of explanation given, turns from his worship to downright blasphemy, and assaults with every expression of rage and contempt the "Sappho" whom he had heretofore adored. It is true that it was on no meek and silent sufferer that his insults were poured. Lady Mary was quite able to defend herself, and meets him at his own weapons with scorn that equals his, if not with equal powers. But the description she gives of the quarrel is the only one in which there is any *vraisemblance*. At an unlucky moment, her granddaughter tells us, "when

she least expected what romancers call a *declaration*, he made such passionate love to her, as, in spite of her utmost endeavours to be angry and look grave, provoked an immoderate fit of laughter." It is easy to believe that the ridicule of the fair creature by his side was more bitter to the unhappy little poet than any other punishment could have been. If his heart was really interested, as might very well be from the tone of his letters, what a frightful mortification must have fallen upon him in that burst of laughter! It was enough to turn the milk into gall, the love into hatred. "From that moment he became her implacable enemy," adds the story; and but that Pope has fallen a little out of the knowledge of this generation, it would be unnecessary to recall the remorseless lines in which the enchantress is handed down to the justice of posterity. Our space forbids us to enter here into one of the bitterest of literary feuds. Lady Mary, as we have said, was no harmless sufferer; she turned upon her assailant, if it is true that she had a hand in the verses to the Imitator of Horace, with virulence at least equal to his own; and even if guiltless in this respect, spoke of him with a contempt which, like his bitterness, overshot its mark. If Lady Mary ever were vulgar, it would be in the passage in a letter to Arbuthnot, where she suggests that, if Pope is "skilled in counterfeiting hands," he will not only gratify his malice but increase his fortune by these means, and so she hopes she will see him exalted according to his merits. But

it is hard to be just, or even generous, in a quarrel of this description, and there is nothing to prove that at the beginning of it Lady Mary was to blame.

Her entire life worked itself out in these twenty years—the time of her maturity, her highest bloom of beauty, and full force of intellect. Her children, whom she brought back to England infants, grew up, the one to a disreputable and wretched manhood, the other to the life of a fortunate matron and good mother. She had all she had hoped for in the dreary moments of her seclusion, or so at least it would appear. Her letters to her sister afford us, for some time, various glimpses of her satisfaction with her actual circumstances. "I see everybody, but converse with nobody but *des amies choisies*," she says, when she had been for six or seven years established in England, and had arrived *al mezzo del cammin di nostra vita.* "I see the whole town every Sunday, and select a few that I retain to supper; in short, if life could be always what it is, I believe I have so much humility in my temper that I could be contented without anything better, this two or three hundred years." . . . "I write to you at this time piping hot from the birth-night," she says again, "my brain warmed with all the agreeable ideas that fine clothes, fine gentlemen, brisk tunes, and lively dances can raise there. . . . First you must know that I led up the ball, which you'll stare at; but, what is more, I believe in my conscience I made one of the best figures there; to say truth, people are grown so extravagantly ugly,

that we old beauties are forced to come out on show-days to keep the Court in countenance." It was the kind of life she had longed for, when it had seemed unattainable; and so long as her children were babies, it was a pleasant life: a fact which she acknowledges with characteristic frankness, though the acknowledgment is one which, even in the most favourable circumstances, few people care to make. But Lady Mary's satisfaction with her existence does not seem to have lasted longer than that brief lull from anxiety, the moment when her children were young. Probably she had fallen into relations with her husband such as are unfortunately common enough in all ages; had given up any expectation of support or tenderness from him, and transferred her hopes, as so many women do, almost without knowing it, to the children, in whom her existence had begun afresh. To Lady Mary, as to so many another mother, this expectation too, the last and most precious, failed like the others. As the years go on, it is in this changed cadence that her thoughts find utterance—a strain still full of courage and unconquerable spirit, but to which its very tone of determined optimism gives an expression more sad than absolute complaint:—

"All these things, and five hundred more, convince me (as I have the most profound veneration for the Author of Nature) that we are here in an actual state of punishment: I am satisfied I have been one of *the condemned* ever since I was born; and, in submission to the divine justice, I don't at all doubt that I deserved it in some former state. I will still hope that I am only in purgatory; and that, after whining and grunting

a certain number of years, I shall be translated to some more happy sphere, where virtue will be natural and custom reasonable. I grow very devout, as you see, and place all my hopes in the next life, being totally persuaded of the nothing of this. Don't you remember how miserable we were in the little parlour at Thoresby? We then thought marrying would put us at once into possession of all we wanted. . . . Though, after all, I am still of opinion that it is extremely silly to submit to ill fortune. One should pluck up a spirit and live upon cordials, when one can have no other nourishment. These are my present endeavours; and I run about, though I have five thousand pins and needles running into my heart. I try to console myself with a small damsel who is at present everything I like; but, alas! she is yet in a white frock. At fourteen she may run away with the butler:—there's one of the blessed consequences of great disappointments: you are not only hurt by the thing present, but it cuts off all future hopes, and makes your very expectations melancholy. *Quelle vie!*" "My girl gives me great prospect of satisfaction," she writes a little later; "but my young rogue of a son is the most ungovernable little rake that ever played truant." And again, "I am vexed to the blood by my young rogue of a son, who has contrived, at his age, to make himself the talk of the whole nation. He is gone knight-erranting, God knows where; and hitherto it is impossible to find him. Nothing that ever happened to me has troubled me so much——"

Thus after her moment of repose, after the disappointments of youth had come to be buried out of sight, and life, no longer craving for actual happiness, had grown contented with the reflection of it—the round of occupation, the chosen friends, the little damsel in her white frock—fate awakes, and the grand tumult recommences. Joy not being possible, the woman had contented herself with peace; but such an escape was not to be. The course of pain

begins over again, the lull is over, the storms rise; the "young rogue," by steps that no doubt rang heavier, and ever heavier, upon his mother's heart, sank into a ruined and despicable man, about whose unworthiness even love could not deceive itself; the little maiden grew up and married, and went away. The loneliness which had been too much for her in early days, when it was her husband who forsook her, fell back in full force upon the woman who had now no new life to hope for. She did what it was like her high spirit to do. She fled from it all, with or without the hope that her husband would join her. Like enough, the houses in which abode the ghosts of that child in white, and of that ruined boy, were intolerable to a mind which never could sink into the pathos of desertion. It was her nature to throw off the burden, so far as mortal powers could shake it off. The impatience of a temperament to which monotony was insupportable, drove her to seek remedies, if not of one kind, then of another. She could not have her children back, nor remodel her life. But she could rush away to the ends of the earth, with a desperate tranquillity, which nobody guessed at, and with a faith in her own power of being amused and interested, her own unquenchable vitality, which is pathetic in its utter abstinence from all appeals to our sympathy. She knew that her eyes could not refuse to see, nor her faculties to note, nor her thoughts, which were ever young, to rush into new channels, however heavy the heart might be. And thus, at an

age when tame natures think themselves beyond all novelties of movement, and take refuge in chimney-corners, Lady Mary, incapable of such consolation, arose and fled into new scenes, as many an imprisoned soul at this very day — unable to die, incapable of vegetation, compelled by God's will, and a vitality stronger than all griefs and troubles, to live in the fullest sense of the word—would be but too glad to do. A woman more bound by the real or imaginary bond of duty, more limited by conventional claims and regard for the world's opinion, would no doubt have stayed at home and devoured her heart in silence; but Lady Mary did not care for the world's opinion. Her character for eccentricity, her self-will and independent habits, must all have helped in her decision. When her daughter was married, and her son hopeless, and her life unsupportable, the daring woman at fifty went off alone into new scenes. To such a mind and temperament as hers, it was the natural thing to do.

And no doubt the unsympathetic, respectable critic wonders much how she could have left the everyday life, which was so tempting, and Mr Wortley's sweet society—why she could not have taken to knotting, and to gossip, and lived as other people did—for what reason she could not bear the son's shame and the daughter's absence as other people have to do? And the painstaking literary observer, with this problem before him, roots out gravely from the ashes of the past, a M. Ruremonde, a rash French

speculator, and disappointed lover, who gave her his money to invest in South Sea stock, and raved at her when it was lost. Perhaps this was the reason why she left England for two-and-twenty years; perhaps the high-minded Wortley sent his wife away. "Causes for this separation have been rumoured, of a nature which, of course, never could have reached her granddaughter, which make it wonderful only that Mr Wortley should have so long borne with such eccentricities of conduct and temper, and should have arranged the separation with so much feeling and good sense," says one of these sages. But rumours are poor things to hold up before us at a distance of a hundred and thirty years—and even Horace Walpole, even Pope, has nothing but vague irritation to vent against Lady Mary. And Mr Wortley's letters after his wife's departure give us for the first time a certain friendliness for the heavy man, who is glad of her comfort in his composed way, and trusts her in their common concerns, and cares for her health and wellbeing. The two would seem after their stormy beginning to have grown into a certain friendship with the years. Perhaps he meant to join her, as several of his letters imply; or perhaps he permitted her to believe that he meant to join her; or perhaps it was held vaguely possible, as a thing that might or might not be, indifferent to the world, not over-interesting even to themselves. They had never been a fond pair—but they never seem to have been more thoroughly friendly, more at their ease

with one another, than at the moment when, according to charitable critics, Mr Wortley, unable to bear it any longer, sent his brilliant wife away.

Their correspondence clearly contradicts such a hypothesis, whatever Lady Mary's faults either of temper or conduct might have been. But the fact remains, that at an age when most people begin to feel doubly the want of friends and comforters around them, this woman tore herself up by the roots from the place where she had lived so long, and went forth alone into new scenes and among new faces. She fled into the wilderness like the typical woman of Scripture—where her past happiness could not stare her too closely in the face, nor the present blank of existence crush her quite; where her feuds and controversies and enmities could not affect the new, white, gentle life of her good child; nor the miserable story of her evil one surround her with malicious whispers and the pity of the crowd. It was a strange, unprecedented sort of self-banishment; and yet for such a woman it was a natural thing to do.

Thus we arrive at the last period of Lady Mary's life. We have said that she never was an impassioned woman. No more futile parallel was ever made than that which calls her the English Sevigné. The two natures are as distinct as ever two natures were. It is possible that the character of Madame de Sevigné may have affected and moulded the ideal of her nation, as it certainly reaches in her its fullest impersonation. The highest type of excellence to the

French mind is the woman who has no passion in her life but that of motherhood, who lives but for her children, and who is made by them, and by the race in general, into a tender idol, worried, no doubt, and vexed and wounded in the ordinary course of existence, but always theoretically worshipped. Madame de Sevigné is the highest type of this saintly creature; more tender, more constant, more impassioned, than any lover, giving all, asking nothing except that little recompense of love which she well knows is but a shadow of her own; content to give up all individual life, to regard the events of her existence only as so many means of interesting or amusing her absent child, living upon that child's recollection, longing for her presence, turning every scene around her into a shrine for the object of her soft idolatry. Such is the Frenchwoman. Her own many gifts, the tender brilliancy of her genius, her wit, her lively apprehension, are all handmaids to the love which is the one conscious principle of her being. They enable her to woo, with many a gentle art, the perhaps distracted attention of the absent; they furnish her with all those sweet wiles of affection, devices sometimes pathetic, always beautiful, to call back by moments the heart which once was her own, but now has gone from her to the stronger claims of husband and children. One weeps and one smiles over the tender record. Never was purer passion nor self-abandonment more complete.

Lady Mary Wortley is of an entirely different character. Love and longing for the absent may be, and no doubt are, gnawing at her heart also; but her philosophy is to make herself independent of these, to occupy herself, to fill the remnant of her life with interests which may break the force of that painful longing. Instead of concentrating her heart and thoughts upon the chance of a momentary meeting now and then, which may cheat with a semblance of reunion only to pierce the sufferer with new pangs of parting, she makes up her mind with a stern but not ignoble philosophy that all such sweet possibilities are over. She takes herself away to hide her solitude, to withdraw the shadow of her deserted life from that of her child. She sets forth in her letters all her surroundings, all her occupations, not by way of amusing her correspondent alone, but by way of showing that her own life is yet worth living, and her individuality unimpaired. It is possible that in this steady and unfaltering purpose there may be almost a higher principle of affection than that which moves the tender outpourings of the other mother's heart; but it is the tenderness of a stoic, content to take what is possible, and to resign what cannot be hoped for, and not the effusion of love which dies for a response. Madame de Sevigné, but for the soft dignity which was inalienable from her as her child's mother, would have been a servant for her love. Lady Mary could not but live her own life, and preserve her independence and personality. In her Italian villa, queen

of the alien hamlet, legislator for her neighbour cottages, the English lady took her forlorn yet individual place; filling her days with a thousand occupations, dazzling the strange little world about her with brilliant talk, seeking forgetfulness in books, living and growing old in her own way with a certain proud reasonableness and philosophy; deluding herself with no dreams, forbidding her heart to brood over the past, and making a heroic and partially successful attempt to be sufficient to herself. We follow her brave spirit through the haze of years with a certain wondering sympathy, a surprised respect. "Keep my letters," said Lady Mary, in the heyday of her life; "they will be as good as Madame de Sevigné's forty years hence." But no sacredness of time and no warmth of appreciation could ever make the two works equal. They spring from an altogether different inspiration, and reveal a totally diverse soul.

The period of exile imposed upon herself by this singular woman was almost a third part of her whole life. She was twenty-two years in Italy, not always resident in the same place, though Venice was her chief abode, and the little watering-place of Louvere seems to have been her favourite refuge from the summer heats; during which time her correspondence with her husband and daughter was uninterrupted except by the vicissitudes of the post, and the contrariety of ambassadors and consuls. Even then in her waning years she was not an inoffensive personage; but always a woman of mark, making enemies

as well as friends. Her letters undergo a gradual change as her life changes. From London she had written to her sister as one woman of the world, active and full of life, might be expected to write to another. In her Italian correspondence her voice grows sober, her style composed. It is the wisdom of years, not lofty, but yet full of sense and reason, and unexaggerated reality. She gives her opinion with the fulness of detail and calm of experience which belong to her age; but she does not insist on her opinion being received. She consents to the different views of her daughter with a quiet tolerance. "You see I was not mistaken in supposing we should have disputes concerning your daughters, if we were together, since we can differ even at this distance," she writes, apparently after receiving Lady Bute's reply to two or three long and careful letters upon education. "The sort of learning," she adds, "that I recommended is not so expensive, either of time or money, as dancing, and, in my opinion, likely to be of much more use to Lady ——, if her memory and apprehension are what you represented them to me. However, every one has a right to educate their children their own way, and I shall speak no more on that subject."

Thus she withdraws from every appearance of controversy. Her life had been marked by broils enough, but here it is evident she put force on herself, and would give no excuse for estrangement. And as even this subject, which she felt herself to be an authority

on, was dangerous ground, the exile, in her wonderful self-control, turns from it without a word of reproach, and goes back to the subject of her vineyards and gardens, her villages and her books. She tells her daughter how she has sat up all night over *Clarissa Harlowe* and wept over it; but adds the most sagacious criticism upon the defects of the school of fiction to which it belongs, and the book's individual weaknesses. "I fancy you are now saying, 'tis a sad thing to grow old," she says at the end of a long letter on literary subjects, with a half apology, which is wonderfully pathetic. "What does my poor mamma mean by troubling me with criticisms on books which nobody but herself has ever read? You must allow something to my solitude. I have a pleasure in writing to my dear child, and not many subjects to write upon." Thus she lives her solitary life, and takes what forlorn pleasure she can out of it. "I find by experience more sincere pleasures with my books and garden than all the flutter of a court could give me," she says. But the picture has taken a sober colouring; an air of loneliness breathes through it. Not the restless palpitating loneliness of the young Lady Mary, years before, on the Hinchingbroke terrace, when all the brilliant world lay within reach, yet the robin-redbreast, with "good-humour and humanity," alone bore her company; but a calm solitude, undisturbed by anticipation, and without hope. Resolution steady and gentle, yet almost stern in its constancy, inspires the strange

record. Never to murmur at the inevitable, to be no burden, no shadow upon any one, to make the best of her life, and get some good out of its most unpromising conditions; to be herself, let everything change around her. Such is the quiet determination that underlies all her pretty descriptions, all her accounts of places and people, her criticisms and her arguments. She is no melancholy suppliant bidding for pity, striving after a reluctant love; but a composed observer, reticent and unexacting upon others, because she has wisely preserved a life of her own. That life is not one that could have had many charms for a less powerful or self-sustaining spirit; but there is in it an inalienable dignity of self-command, and that mingled submission to, and resistance of, the fatal coil of circumstances which display the highest qualities of humanity. Lady Mary submitted and made the best of the changes which she could not help; but at the same time she made props to herself of her own abounding vital force, of her faculty of amusement, even of the eccentricities of her character, to save herself from being crushed by them. In doing so, she transgressed many of the chief articles in the code of respectability, which ordains that a woman, when lonely and abandoned, shall make up her mind to it, and die or sink into apathy without showing any frivolous inclinations towards a life which the world has pronounced over for her. The woman whose story we have so far traced was not one who could die, or who could

consent to be crushed into inanity. She fled from that life-in-death. It was not possible to her to do less than live so long as existence lasted; and we believe it would be better for humanity, better for our common chances of happiness, if the wounded, the lonely, and the deserted shared her instinctive wisdom, and asserted their forlorn right to such existence as suited their constitutions, instead of sinking into the tedium of forced uniformity, as so many shipwrecked people do.

It is curious to turn from the subdued yet lifelike colours of this picture to the daub marked with the same name on the walls of Horace Walpole's endless gallery. She was old when he met her at Florence, and he was not the sort of young man whom an ancient beauty would inspire with any respectful or sympathetic feeling. Although she found him "wonderfully civil," Lady Mary was an old hag to the lively youth, as old women of every description often are in the eyes of the younger generation. "Her dress, her avarice, and her impudence must amaze any one that never heard her name," says Horace. "She wears a foul mob that does not cover her greasy black locks, that hang down never combed nor curled; an old mazarine blue wrapper that gapes open and discovers a canvas petticoat; the face swelled violently on one side, partly covered with a plaster, and partly with white paint, which for cheapness she has bought so coarse that you would not use it to wash a chimney. In three words I

will give you her picture as we drew it in the *sortes Virgilianæ*—

'Insanum vatem aspicies.'

I give you my honour we did not choose it."

This description chimes in badly with the idea conveyed by her letters; but yet, alas! the evidence of tradition would seem to prove, as might be made plain by various unsavoury and unquotable anecdotes, that Lady Mary was not distinguished by that scrupulous regard to cleanliness of person which is one of the chief articles nowadays in the social code. It was not of the first importance then, and we fear there is nothing to be said on this subject for the old woman of fashion. When the Prince of Wales bade his wife observe how becomingly Lady Mary was dressed, he gave her the only tribute which in this particular she ever seems to have received. Even in her earliest years she herself expressed boldly her indifference and almost contempt for dress; and though she warms to a certain degree of womanly enthusiasm about the decorations of the harem, her admiration was stimulated by many extraneous causes. Possibly the young people in the Florentine palaces, when they gazed at the old Englishwoman, with her careless garb and her strange reputation, laughed with Horace Walpole; a circumstance with which we, whose aim is to draw the picture of her mind and heart from materials which she alone could furnish, have but a secondary concern. But at the same time the contrast between the sketch made

from without and the picture which grows under her own fingers within is worth notice. No doubt there are other instances, as well as that of Lady Mary, in which the old-fashioned figure, worn with age, and subject to all the quips and cranks of time, yet clinging with what seems an unnatural frivolity to the amusements of the world, at which the young people laugh, would be found, if the spectator looked deeper, to be but balancing itself by these contemptible means on the frail plank that bridges over those abysses of self-annihilation and nonentity which are worse than death.

We will give a last sketch of this indomitable old woman in her own words, as addressed to the friends of her old age, Sir James and Lady Frances Stewart, to whom, when nearly seventy, she addresses letters as full of playful wit and cordial friendship as if her faculties had been at their freshest, and in whose behalf she employs what interest she has with her son-in-law Lord Bute, then in full favour with the young King George III.:—

"Solitude begets whimsies; at my time of life one usually falls into those that are melancholy, though I endeavour to keep up a certain sprightly folly that (I thank God) I was born with. . . . My chief study all my life has been to lighten misfortunes and multiply pleasures as far as human nature can. . . . You know I am enthusiastic in my friendships. I also hear from all hands of my daughter's prosperity; you, madam, who are a mother, may judge of my pleasure in her happiness, though I have no taste for that sort of felicity. I could never endure with patience the austerities of a court life. I was saying every day from my heart (while I was condemned to it),

The things that I would do, these I do not; and the things I would not do, those do I daily; and I had rather be a sister of St Clara than lady of the bedchamber to any queen in Europe. It is not age and disappointment that have given me these sentiments; you may see them in a copy of verses sent from Constantinople in my early youth to my uncle Fielding, and by his well-intended indiscretion shown about, copies taken, and at last miserably printed. I own myself such a rake I prefer liberty to chains of diamonds, and when I hold my peace (like King David) it is pain and grief to me."

Mr Wortley died in 1761, leaving behind him an enormous fortune. Whether the family business connected with this brought Lady Mary to England, or whether she was drawn home by the instinct of all dying creatures, we are not informed. It is evident, however, that her return had been spoken of for some time previously. "I have outlived the greatest part of my acquaintance," she writes to her daughter in the year 1760; "and, to say the truth, a return to crowd and bustle after my long retirement would be disagreeable to me. Yet if I could be of use either to your father or your family, I would venture the shortening of the insignificant days of your affectionate mother." Still later she writes to Sir James Stewart, "I confess that though I am (it may be) beyond the strict bounds of reason pleased with my Lord Bute's and my daughter's prosperity, I am doubtful whether I will attempt to be a spectator of it. I have so many years indulged my natural inclinations to solitude and reading, I am unwilling to return to crowds and bustle, which would be unavoidable in London." But her husband's death seems to

have decided the step which she thus regarded, and in the beginning of 1762 she had reached her native country. Walpole once more comes in at this point with the only description we have of the ancient beauty, now seventy-two, and in very broken health. He had sent her a copy of his book, *Royal and Noble Authors*. Notwithstanding his contemptuous comments on her, he had been "wonderfully civil," she herself tells us, in Florence, and hastened to pay his respects on her arrival in London, but yet he cannot resist the temptation of making another ill-natured sketch of her:—

"I went last night to visit her," writes Horace. "I give you my honour, and you who know her will believe me without it, the following is a faithful description: I found her in a little miserable bedchamber of a ready-furnished house, with two tallow candles and a bureau covered with pots and pans. On her head, in full of all accounts, she had an old black-laced hood wrapped entirely round so as to conceal all hair or want of hair; no handkerchief, but instead of it a kind of horseman's riding-coat, calling itself a *pet-en-l'air*, made of a dark-green brocade, with coloured and silver flowers, and lined with furs; bodice laced; a full dimity petticoat sprigged; velvet muffetees on her arms; grey stockings and slippers. Her face less changed in twenty years than I could have imagined. I told her so, and she was not so tolerable twenty years ago that she should have taken it for flattery; but she did, and literally gave me a box on the ear. She is very lively, all her senses perfect, her language as imperfect as ever, her avarice greater. She entertained me at first with nothing but the cheapness of the provisions at Helvoet. With nothing but an Italian, a French, and a Prussian, all men-servants, and something she calls an old secretary, but whose age, till he appears, will be doubtful, she has travelled everywhere. She receives all the world who go

to homage her as queen-mother, and crams them into this kennel."

Yet Horace was one of the first to visit her, and the most ready to flatter, though he could not deny himself even here the monstrous insinuations about the *old* secretary of a woman of seventy-two! dislike evidently rendering him blind. "Those who could remember her arrival," writes Lady Louisa Stuart, on the other hand, "spoke with delight of the clearness, vivacity, and raciness of her conversation, and the youthful vigour which seemed to animate her mind. She did not appear displeased at the general curiosity to see her, nor void of curiosity herself concerning the new things and people that her native country presented to her view after so long an absence. . . . 'I am most handsomely lodged,' she said; 'I have two very decent closets and a cupboard on each floor.' This served to laugh at, but could not be a pleasant exchange for the Italian palazzo." She came with her old prepossessions and enmities to a new world, in which her daughter had taken a new place of her own, and into which a new generation had grown up. But for that same daughter,—no longer her "little damsel in white," the girl whose life had been, as she says, her passion—but Lord Bute's wife, and mother of nine or ten children, each one of whom, doubtless, was of much more consequence to her than her mother,—Lady Mary must have felt herself more utterly a stranger than among the palaces of Venice or the rural byways of Louvere. She brought her

death with her to her native country in the most terrible shape that death can come. A secret cancer, like the fabled fox that gnawed the Spartan's vitals, had been undermining her health for some time, and in ten months after her return to England, Lady Mary died.

Thus the tragedy ended like all tragedies, the last act in it being the least tragic, the least sorrowful of all. This woman of the world, too, had her speechless weight upon her, her burden patiently borne. She carried it heroically, without a word, trying ever with supreme valour to conceal it from herself, and refuse to herself the sad luxury of brooding over it. It is with a sigh of relief that we turn from this as from so many other graves. The labouring man had gone out to his toil and labour till the evening; and now the soft night, wrapping all griefs in its darkness and stillness, weeping all nameless agonies with its mild dews, had come.

There is little to be said about Lady Mary Wortley's writings. Her life and soul and curious personality live in her letters. In her verses there is only the artificial reflex of an age and style of the highest artificiality, with sparkles of wit, no doubt, and full of the wonderful clearness of a keen-eyed, quick-observing woman of the world. But she too, like most other persons with whom one comes in contact in the long vistas of history, is in herself more interesting, more curious, a thousand times closer to us, than any of her works.

V

THE POET

THE POET.

IN a rich, leafy, luxuriant country, wealthy with great trees and sweeps of immemorial turf, the soul of which is Windsor and its great Park, still shading off into broken relics of forest, lies, among the oaks and elm-trees, the scattered hamlet of Binfield, in which Pope's early days were spent—a place so tiny and so rude that it scarcely counts as a village. The remains of the house in which he lived, and which is still identified by popular recollection as the house of Pope the poeter—remains not ruinous and picturesque, but quite comfortable and respectable—are now enclosed in numberless additions and improvements, and form the heart of a modern villa. One homely wainscot room has survived, and so has the local distinction of the "Poeter's" reputation. Such a title bestowed by the lips of a bumpkin among those silent fields is the best proof that there is still such a thing as abstract fame. It is no longer

> "A little house with trees a-row,
> And, like its master, very low,"

but it retains the row of big-branched storm-worn firs, with great trunks gleaming red in the sunset, which doubtless inspired the description; and on the lawn a rusty, melancholy cypress, said to have been planted by the poet.

To this leafy, level land, just where it begins to break and undulate—where oaks twist their great arms and throw their vast shadow, and rugged hollies grow to forest-trees—Alexander Pope, a poor little deformed boy, was brought out of hot and busy London by an honest, worthy tradesman-pair of parents in the end of the seventeenth century. He was born in 1688, it is said, in Lombard Street, where his father, "an honest merchant, dealt in Hollands wholesale." Pope the elder had made money enough to retire from business at a comparatively early age. He had made ten thousand pounds, says one; and another raises the amount to twenty thousand. Yet, notwithstanding the proof of some knowledge of the world which is conveyed by the making of a moderate fortune, he is supposed to have "found no better use for his money than that of locking it up in a chest and taking from it what his expenses required"—a waste of capital which has no analogy with the shrewd character which he seems to have transmitted to his son, nor, indeed, is it consistent with various ascertained particulars of their life. The house at Binfield, with twenty acres of land, was his own, and he had rent-charges on other property, and investments abroad, which rescue his name from this stigma

of foolish improvidence. The few particulars that remain on record of this unobtrusive father reveal a shadow of peaceable respectability, retired and contented, a man busy in his garden, proud of his vegetables, interfering with little meaning yet some success in his boy's childish studies. Pope, like his father, was deformed and weakly from his birth—a dwarfish, amiable, invalid boy, with a sweet childish voice, and general indications of precocity. The tiny little house has every appearance of having been inspired by that extreme regard for personal comfort and narrow domesticity common to the class which its inmates belonged to. The good couple fondled and watched over their only child, but were not without a careful eye to his education. They were Roman Catholics, and, as their son grandiloquently explains—

> "Certain laws, by sufferers thought unjust,
> Denied all posts of profit or of trust."

But there is no indication of anything in the elder Pope above the level of a retired shopkeeper, or which could have made this denial of office a personal injury to him. No doubt he pottered about his garden, and sat in the sun before his little country-house as calmly as if he had been eligible to the post of Prime Minister. Many years after, when Pope was at the height of his fame, it seems to have occurred to him that the homely pair to whom he was always so faithful stood in need of embellishment; and he would appear to have invented a

pedigree for them which rests on no foundation but that of his own word. According to this apocryphal description, the poet's father sprang from the younger branch of a family of good repute in Ireland, and related to Lord Downe—an origin afterwards changed and elaborated into "a gentleman's family in Oxfordshire, the head of which was the Earl of Downe, whose sole heiress married the Earl of Lindsay." It is evident, however, that there is not a morsel of evidence to support the story; it "had never been heard of" by his relatives, and was probably set up, says his latest biographer, "to shame Lord Hervey and Lady Mary," who had driven him frantic by a taunt at his "birth obscure." The family of Pope's mother is less mysterious, and apparently had some claims to gentility; but the old people themselves, it is evident, made no pretensions to rank, and lived their quiet, virtuous, humdrum life in irreproachable independence and modesty, tenderly indulgent to and pathetically proud of their poor little crooked, puny, sweet-voiced boy.

The education of the poet does not seem, however, to have been retarded by his bodily weakness. He was taught to read at home, and taught himself to write by copying the printed letters from books, an accomplishment he retained all his life. His first education, he himself says, "was extremely loose and disconcerted." He fell into the hands of priests, one after another, and seems to have taken what learning they could give him without any of the bile

with which, in such a time, a proscribed class would be likely to mingle it. At eight years old he was sent to a school in Hampshire, and learnt the Greek and Latin rudiments together, growing acquainted at the same time with the first beginnings of poetry in Ogilby's *Iliad* and Sandys's *Ovid*. He was transferred shortly after to Twyford, a Catholic school near Winchester, where the precocious imp wrote a lampoon on his master, for which he was flogged. The punishment, however, was not allowed to work its due effect; for the indulgent father, thinking of his boy's weakness, doubtless, and not of a *Dunciad* to come, withdrew the juvenile satirist in high offence, and placed him at a school in London, where his budding inclinations were cultivated in another direction. "He used sometimes to stroll to the playhouse," says Dr Johnson, "and was so delighted with theatrical exhibitions that he formed a kind of play from Ogilby's *Iliad*, with some verses of his own intermixed, which he persuaded his schoolfellows to act, with the addition of his master's gardener, who personated Ajax." This was when he was about twelve, and was not apparently his first commencement as a maker of verses. "I began writing verses," he says, "farther back than I can well remember." He "lisped in numbers," in short; and the father at home set the boy subjects for his baby doggerel, and was his first critic, sending him often back to "new-turn them," according to his mother's evidence, saying, "These are not good rhymes"—a characteristic

beginning for the polished, elaborate, and much-corrected verse which he was thereafter to produce.

At this age he had already so great an enthusiasm for poetry that he induced some of his friends to take him to Will's Coffeehouse, where he saw Dryden. It was but for a moment, but it was one of the recollections upon which he loved to dwell. He had already written an *Ode to Solitude*, "in which there is nothing more than other forward boys have attained," says Dr Johnson; but to the critic not imbued with that love of "correct" verse which belonged, among its other virtues, to the eighteenth century, the soft cadence of this schoolboy ode is more pleasing than the blank, harmonious waste of the *Pastorals* or the other early poems.

> "Happy the man whose wish and care
> A few paternal acres bound,
> Content to breathe his native air
> In his own ground,"

says the philosopher of twelve, in a not unusual strain of holiday satisfaction with his home. Some prophecy of the tall talk of his subsequent life is in the quaint grandeur of the title of "paternal acres" bestowed upon the little bit of forest land at Binfield, which had been no longer in his father's possession than he himself, the heir of the property, had been; but yet the verses are pretty, and have an echo in them of an older and richer strain than that which was to be eventually his.

Such seems to have been, so far as the formalities of teaching go, the entire sum of Pope's education.

He had nothing more to do with schoolmasters. He went home, and with boyish zeal attacked by himself every book he could lay hold of. Perhaps the weakness of his little distorted frame may have accounted for the strange life of mental excitement and indiscriminate study into which the boy threw himself, with all the trees and all the glades of Windsor calling upon him all day long to pursuits of a very different kind. Whether he might not have been a greater poet had he tossed the books aside and taken his inspiration from the soft slopes of the fair country round, the big-boled beeches, the play of sunshine on the multitudinous leaves, all the sights and sounds that make of a forest land a leafy paradise, it is impossible now to tell. Such was not the instinct of the growing poet. This is the highest picture with which observation and genius could furnish him, of those glorious shades and breezy breadths of champaign amid which his youth was passed :—

> "Here waving groves a checkered scene display,
> And part admit and part exclude the day,
> As some coy nymph her lover's warm address
> Nor quite indulges nor can quite repress;
> There, interspersed in lawns and opening glades,
> There trees arise that share each other's shades;
> Here in full light the russet plains extend,
> There wrapt in clouds the bluish hills ascend:
> Even the wild heath displays her purple dyes,
> And 'midst the desert fruitful fields arise,
> That crowned with tufted trees and springing corn,
> Like verdant isles the sable waste adorn."

To be sure, it was not his fault if the bad taste of his time foisted a coy nymph into the breathing

silence of those soft, solemn woods. But it is curious how entirely untouched were his soul and his style by his early knowledge of one of the most beautiful phases of nature. Oaks do not grow, nor silken beech-leaves open out of the wondrous husk, in any scene of his choosing. He is ignorant how the little birds answer each other among the trees, and how the wood-pigeons coo. The mavis and the merle are never singing among the branches, nor is it a "good greenwood" to the boy-poet. There is no musing nor silence in him. Instead of the long summer dreams under the whispering leaves, with all the doors and windows of the young soul open, and "influences of soul and sense" stealing in unconscious, it is a very different scene that opens on us when we glance at the lad at Binfield. He shut himself up in his room, built himself up with books, read till the stars twinkled in upon him unheeded, read while all the wonders of the sun-setting and sun-rising passed by unknown. He had nothing to do with the beauty outside. The dews fell not, the balm breathed not, for him. So far as this was the work of his weak and sickly body the pitiful spectator could but mourn over the young recluse; but it is evident that art was more congenial to him than nature, then as throughout all his life:—

"My next period," he says, "was in Windsor Forest, where I sat down with an earnest desire of reading, and applied as constantly as I could to it for some years. I was between twelve and thirteen when I went thither, and I continued in this close pursuit of pleasure and languages till nineteen or twenty.

Considering how very little I had when I came from school, I think I may be said to have taught myself Latin as well as French and Greek; and in all these, my chief way of getting them was by translation. . . . The epic poem which I began a little after I was twelve, was *Alcander, Prince of Rhodes.* There was an under-water scene in the first book; it was in the Archipelago. I wrote four books toward it, of about a thousand verses each, and had the copy by me till I burnt it by the advice of the Bishop of Rochester a little before he went abroad. I endeavoured," said he, smiling, "in this poem to collect all the beauties of the great epic writers into one piece. There was Milton's style in one part, and Cowley's in another here the style of Spenser imitated, and there of Statius; here Homer and Virgil, and there Ovid and Claudian. . . . There were also some couplets in it which I have since inserted in some of my other poems without alteration,—as in the *Essay on Criticism*—

> 'Whose honours with increase of ages grow,
> As streams roll down, enlarging as they flow.'

Another couplet in the *Dunciad*—

> 'As man's meanders to the vital spring,
> Roll all their tides, then back their circles bring.'

"In the scattered lessons I used to set myself about that time, I translated above a quarter of the *Metamorphoses*, and that part of Statius which was afterwards printed with the corrections of Walsh. My next work after my epic was my *Pastorals*, so that I did exactly what Virgil says of himself:—

> 'Cum canerem reges et prælia, Cynthius aurem
> Vellit, et admonuit; pastorem, Tityre, pingues
> Pascere oportet oves; deductum dicere carmen.'

"I translated Tully's piece, *De Senectute*, in this early period, and there is a copy of it in Lord Oxford's library. My first taking to imitating was not out of vanity but humility. I saw how defective my own things were, and endeavoured to mend my manner by copying good strokes from others. My epic was about two years in hand—from thirteen to fifteen."

In this curious mental workshop, accordingly the

boy lived and laboured, with his windows shut, we may be sure, and the fever of toil on his worn face. It was a juvenile manufactory, where verse was already turned and re-turned, and where a correct couplet was reckoned the highest product of earth or heaven.

All this unintermitting study must have raised to the point of positive worship the pride and faith of the father and mother in their gifted son. No doubt it was to them, as to most partially educated people, the crowning evidence of genius; and a degree of freedom most unusual at the time must have been granted to him in consequence; for we find him, in his fifteenth year, setting out for London on his own motion, and apparently alone, to add to the classic languages—which, no doubt, he believed himself to have completely mastered—a knowledge of French and Italian. It was thought "a wildish sort of resolution," but still it was given in to with an indulgence which speaks either of unbounded faith on the part of the elder Popes in their son's power of taking care of himself, or of an immense power of self-will in the precocious lad. It would appear—for there are no dates to speak of in the story—that he spent about a year in London with this object or pretence, and learned at least to *read* French; though the fact of his addressing a letter in after days "*Au Mademoiselles Mademoiselles de Maple-Durham*," says little for his knowledge of the language.

"He removed for a time to London," says Dr

Johnson, "that he might study French and Italian, which, as he desired nothing more than to read them, were, by diligent application, soon despatched." Thus the imperfect, superficial self-education, with all its attendant vices of self-satisfaction and conceit, was completed. He seems to have obtained to perfect independence at this early age, and had already begun to correspond with the old *roués* of the coffee-houses, Wycherly and Congreve, and to ape the man.

"He then returned to Binfield," proceeds Dr Johnson, "and delighted himself with his own poetry. He tried all styles and many subjects. He wrote a comedy, a tragedy, an epic poem, with panegyrics on all the princes of Europe; and, as he confesses, thought himself the greatest genius that ever was." This perpetual unwholesome work and seclusion produced their natural results. He became very ill, "and in despondency lay down prepared to die," says Mr Carruthers, his latest biographer. "He sent farewells to his friends; and among these was a priest, Thomas Southcote, who, on receiving Pope's valedictory communication, went immediately to consult Dr Radcliffe, the eccentric but able physician. Radcliffe's prescription was a very simple one: the young man was to study less, and ride on horseback every day. With this recipe the father posted to Binfield; and Pope, having the good sense to follow the prescribed course, speedily got well." This good office was kindly thought of and repaid. Twenty years

after, Pope used all his influence through Sir Robert Walpole to get an abbacy in France for Southcote; one among many friendly offices which embellish his life.

The boy, even at this early period, was not without friends of a class who might have been supposed likely to polish and refine him. "He was, through his whole life, ambitious of splendid acquaintance," says Johnson, with that latent contempt for the character of his hero which throws a curious tinge of depreciation into his narrative. One of his neighbours, Sir William Trumbull—a man experienced in the world, and who had retired to the precincts of the Forest after a long diplomatic career—took up young Pope with much warmth of interest. "They rode out together almost daily, read their favourite classic authors together, and, when absent, kept up a correspondence." Sir William was sixty, and his young friend but sixteen; but, no doubt, the society of the accomplished little humpback made a diversion to the old statesman from the monotony of the woodland rides and the dulness of country neighbours. When the *Pastorals* were written they were carried to this earliest patron to be criticised and approved; and Sir William must have felt his liking justified. Of the few letters that passed between this pair of friends, the old man's are pleasant, indulgent, and affectionate; and the replies are as fine, abstract, and artificial as the letters of such a youth might be expected to be. The fact is, indeed, that almost every-

body whose letters to him are preserved surpasses the letters of Pope, which are always, in the first half of his life, made-up specimens of composition manufactured into the sprightly, the solemn, the poetic, and the gallant, according as they were wanted, and in each vein overdoing the part. How anybody, much less a boy of sixteen, could manage to fill so many sheets of paper without giving a single clue to his own individuality, or to the circumstances surrounding him, is very extraordinary. He writes about poetry—his own or other people's; he makes handsome cut-and-dry remarks about friendship, and the delights of study, and other cognate subjects; but what or who he was—what were his surroundings, his position, the human circumstances about him—there is absolutely nothing to tell. Almost the only indication we have of the dim world about Binfield is in the following description:—

"I have now changed the scene," he writes to Wycherley, "from the town to the country—from Will's Coffeehouse to Windsor Forest. I find no other difference than this betwixt the common town-wits and the downright country-fools: that the first are partly in the wrong, with a little more flourish and gaiety, and the last neither in the right nor the wrong, but confirmed in a stupid, settled medium betwixt both. . . . Ours are a sort of modest inoffensive people, who neither have sense nor pretend to have any, but indulge a jovial sort of dulness. They are commonly known in the world by the name of honest, civil gentlemen. They live much as they ride—at random; a kind of hunting-life, pursuing with earnestness and hazard something not worth the catching—never in the way nor out of it. I can't but prefer solitude to the company of all these."

A little later, he once more becomes conscious for a second of the outer world. "I assure you I am looked on in the neighbourhood for a very well-disposed person," he says; "no great hunter, indeed, but a great admirer of the noble sport, and only unhappy in my want of constitution for that and drinking. They all say 'tis a pity I am so sickly; and I think 'tis pity they are so healthy," the young man adds, with a certain sense of humour. These brief notices are the only indications of his external life that can be gleaned out of one large volume of letters. Here and there in his poems he gives, it is true, an artful sketch of his home, in which the Pope household is seen as through a magnifying-glass—elevated, enlarged, and heightened. It is the kind of sketch which would have been suitable for the inmates of Chatsworth or Arundel—but is ludicrously grand when it refers to the cottage at Binfield with its twenty acres, however kindly and affectionate that home may have been.

There are many curious and very evident differences between the life of a man of letters in the eighteenth century and at the present moment. A certain freshness of interest and curiosity as to the genus Author seems to have existed amid all the artificial and conventional features of an age much less spontaneous and natural than our own. Perhaps the reason was, that literature was kept within a much smaller circle, and the credit of all who professed to be of the Republic of Letters was involved

in elevating the pretensions of genius. Gay, whose powers were but of a secondary order, and who began life in a linen-draper's shop, was soured and spirit-broken by being offered *only* an appointment as gentleman-usher at Court, in consequence of his poetic fame; and Pope, a greater genius, though accepting no rewards, seems to have stepped at once into the best society which England could give him on the sole score of his poetry, and without even the social gifts or power of conversation which sometimes supplement such claims. Nowadays, the young aspirant has less easy work. Success brings him a substantial and honest reward, no doubt, but it does not bring him the adulation, the compliment, the social elevation of old. Literature has become a profession like any other in our days. The man who reaches its highest pinnacle makes for himself a place in the world exactly as a great soldier, a great doctor, or lawyer does; but his genius, of itself, does not make him free of all classes, or give him a position of universal privilege, as it was once supposed to do. Young writers would save themselves some pangs did they fully recognise this fact. A young poet, whatever his genius, issuing from a humble household like that at Binfield, would have no more chance of being petted by maids of honour and flattered by lettered nobles in the present day, than he would have of being made Prime Minister. This discovery often adds a special twinge to the many lesser miseries of the literary profession; for the failure of

false expectations is always accompanied with a touch of bitterness, more stinging and painful, because less noble and elevated, than the pang which follows the destruction of real hopes.

The *Pastorals* were sent by Sir William Trumbull to Wycherley, and from Wycherley passed into the hands of Walsh, and had a private circulation, sufficient in those days to give fame, before they were presented to the general public. "Pope had now declared himself a poet," says Dr Johnson; "and thinking himself entitled to poetical conversation, began at seventeen to frequent Will's, a coffeehouse on the north side of Russell Street, in Covent Garden, where the wits of that time used to assemble." His acquaintance multiplied. Walsh, one of the aforesaid "wits," himself a minor poet and kindly critic, instantly extended his friendship to the youth, and invited him to his house. He is recorded also to have given Pope at least one piece of advice which is memorable and characteristic. "We had several great poets," he told the young author, "but we never had one great poet who was correct; and he desired me to make that my study and aim;" an advice which it is evident was thoroughly laid to heart. The private circulation of the *Pastorals* at last brought them under the notice of one of the enterprising publishers of the day, and led to the following proposal:—

"SIR,—I have lately seen a Pastoral of yours in Mr Walsh's and Congreve's hands, which is *extremely fine*, and is approved by the best judges of poetry. I remember I have formerly seen

you in my shop, and am sorry I did not improve my acquaintance with you. If you design your poem for the press, no one shall be more careful in printing it, nor no one can give greater encouragement to it than, sir, your most obedient humble servant, JACOB TONSON."

Alas for the good old days! Where is there now to be found a publisher at once so frank and so condescending?

The *Pastorals*, we avow with humility, are to ourselves impossible reading, and we cannot pretend to give any opinion on them; but if the reader would like to have Mr Walsh's views, his opinion was, that "'tis no flattery at all to say that Virgil had written nothing so good at his age;" and that though "he has taken very freely from the ancients, what he has mixed of his own with theirs is not inferior to what he has taken from them." They were published in 1709, when the author was twenty-one, though written four or five years before. In the same volume were the Pastorals of Ambrose Phillips, works happily gone out of human ken by this time, but which were the means of bringing Pope into the lists of personal strife, and awakening all the expedients of mad and bitter vanity in which his genius was so fruitful. This is not a criticism on his works, but an account of his life; and the quarrels, attacks, subterfuges of all kinds, plots and conspiracies full of endless ingenuity, perpetual self-assertion and wild struggling for the pre-eminence, of which his life is full, cannot but come forward at a very early period into any narrative of an existence so full of war and commotion.

So long as he had not dared the ordeal of public criticism, the young man's temper seems placid enough. He was master of his own actions, his own teacher, a law to himself; nobody seems to have attempted to curb or interfere with him. His superiority to all his poetical contemporaries was so unquestionable that his temptations to self-regard must have been something like those of a king, who stands alone. His early critics fed him with compliments, nourishing the appetite for praise which was evidently fierce within him. Every circumstance of his early education conspired against the undisciplined boy. He was in full possession of that "little learning" which, with curious unconsciousness, he characterises so justly. Wycherley, who had then a certain rank as a poet, respectfully submitted his compositions to the criticism of the lad, and was mauled by him with the frank insolence of youth; but when it came to his own turn Pope could not bear it. His wars began almost as soon as he had made his first public appearance; but before entering upon that stormy tale, we will pause to note the sweeter side of the poet's life.

This softer strain in the unmelodious existence can scarcely be called a romance; and yet it was all that stood for romance in Pope's history. He became acquainted with the sisters Martha and Teresa Blount at a very early period, when all three, it is supposed, were under twenty. They were daughters of one of the Catholic families of the country-side, and accordingly had the link of a common faith (such

as it was) to the young poet. Their home was at Maple-Durham, on the banks of the Thames, not far from Reading; and Pope was familiar at the same time in the house of their uncle, Mr Englefield, at Whiteknights in the same neighbourhood. The two fair young women, above him in rank, touched by the enthusiasm for poetry, which was then a mark of superiority, and no doubt feeling the little hunchback a very *safe* acquaintance, evidently received his attentions and answered his letters, and made a pleasant little excitement out of his friendship, in its earlier days at least. He was not a man whom it was possible to marry; a fact which in itself, though not complimentary to the hero, was, as it continues to be, a wonderful recommendation to female friendship. It is indeed the only thing wanting to make that much-disputed possibility, a true and warm friendship between man and woman without any mixture of love, into a real and pleasant fact. Fools will scoff, no doubt, and critics of impure imaginations revile; but it must be a very lively fancy indeed which can suppose any closer bond between the little poet and these two beautiful sisters. The tie was closer, softer than that of any other friendship: hovering over it, like the figures of his own sylphs, were reflections as it were of other bonds; mutual admirations, such as men cannot entertain for each other, soft railleries, a touch of tenderness more familiar, more respectful than anything that could be exchanged between Jack and Tom; altogether, a union refined and visionary,

as well as constant and real. Martha Blount made up to Pope for the sister whom he had not, for the wife whom he could not have, and yet was unlike both wife and sister. The link is one so fine, so delicate, so natural, that it is next to impossible to define it; and all the more so as vanity on both sides so seldom permits any realisation of this touching and consolatory bond. To Pope in his youth it was evidently as good as any love-making, and developed what humanity was in him; and it is one of the few green spots in his maturer life. His formal stilted letters melt into a kind of nature when he addresses the sisters; his hard notes about business warm with a kind of domesticity when he sends his correspondent the kind wishes of "Mrs Patty." One last exclamation on her part, reported at second or third hand by his biographers, seems to imply that she had grown weary at the end of his long invalidism; but it is clear that to the last he at least was faithful to the friend of his whole life.

The beginning of the friendship is lost in conjecture, and at first opinions are divided as to which of the sisters was his favourite correspondent. And the letters themselves in these early days, when the trio were still between twenty and thirty, and many things may have seemed possible which after existence forbade, are curiously diversified with coolnesses and reconciliations. It is Teresa, the elder, who first calls forth the homage of the poet. The Lines "to a Young Lady, with the works of Voiture," were pub-

lished in 1712, and were contained in a volume sent with a certain lover-like art to *Martha;* but there is not the smallest trace of love in the verses themselves, unless the warmth of the poet's expostulation against marriage should mean more than lies on the surface. "Ah," he cries, addressing a beautiful young woman of three or four and twenty—

"Ah, quit not the free innocence of life
For the dull glory of a virtuous wife,
Nor let false shows nor empty titles please;
Aim not at joy, but rest content with ease.
. . . . . .
But, madame, if the fates withstand, and you
Are destined Hymen's willing victim too,
Trust not too much your now resistless charms—
Those age or sickness soon or late disarms;
Good-humour only teaches charms to last,
Still makes new conquests, and maintains the past."

This philosophical strain does not sound much like love. Neither is there the slightest appearance of passion in the clear description of her changed occupations when she leaves town, and goes from its delights:—

"To plain work and to purling brooks,
Old-fashioned halls, dull courts, and croaking rooks,
She went, from opera, park, assembly, play,
To morning walks and prayers three times a-day,
To part her time 'twixt reading and bohea,
To muse and spill her solitary tea,
Or o'er cold coffee trifle with the spoon;
Count the slow clock, and dine exact at noon,
Divert her eyes with pictures in the fire,
Hum half a tune, tell stories to the squire;
Up to her godly garret after seven,
There starve and pray, for that's the way to heaven."

In this poem there is again a hint at the miseries

of wedlock, and the rude squire, "whose game is whist, whose treat a toast in sack"—

> "Whose laughs are hearty, though his jests are coarse,
> And loves you best of all things—but his horse."

The inference of the unprejudiced reader would be, that in Pope's opinion Teresa Blount was likely to make a loveless and interested match—an idea still further justified by the very curious and unexplained gift to her, made five years after, of an annuity of forty pounds a-year for six years, on condition that she should not be married during that time. Her father had died, and the sisters, with their mother, were poorer than when at Maple-Durham; but still they do not seem to have been in sufficient poverty to make such a benefaction necessary. It is supposed by some one of the many commentators on the subject to have been preliminary to a "connubial settlement;" but all this is matter of the merest conjecture, and there is nothing in the letters to justify the opinion that love or marriage (except in the abstract) had ever been spoken of between them. "All I am good for," he writes to her, "is to write a civil letter, or make a fine speech. The truth is that, considering how often and how openly I have declared love to you, I am astonished and a little affronted that you have not forbid my correspondence, and directly said, *See my face no more.* . . . All I mean by this is, that either you or I cannot be in love with the other: I leave you to guess which of the two is that stupid and insen-

sible creature, so blind to the other's excellences and charms."

Presently, however, the skies cloud over between the two friends. Teresa becomes offended, one does not know why. There are some brief deprecatory notes from Pope, remonstrating. One day he says, "It is really a great concern to me that you mistook me so much this morning." In another letter it has come to the final issue: "Either you would have me your friend, or you would not. If you would, why do you refuse any service I can do you? If you would not, why do you ever receive any?" Day by day the breach evidently grew more serious. He would seem to have had her business affairs in his hands, and either to have dissatisfied her by his management, or to have affronted her in some unknown way which makes everything he does unpalatable to her. He writes at greater length as the misunderstanding grows:—

"Madam,—I am too much out of order to trouble you with a long letter; but I desire to know what is your meaning, to resent my complying with your request, and endeavouring to serve you in the way you proposed, as if I had done you some great injury? You told me if such a thing was the secret of my heart you should entirely forgive, and think well of me. I told it, and find the contrary. You pretended so much generosity as to offer your service in my behalf. The minute after you did me as ill an office as you could, in telling the party concerned it was all but an amusement, occasioned by my loss of another lady.

"You express yourself desirous of increasing your present income upon life. I proposed the only method I then could find, and you encouraged me to proceed in it. When it was

done you received it as if it were an affront; since when I find the very thing in the very manner you wished, and mention it to you, you don't think it worth an answer. If your meaning be that the very things you ask and wish become odious to you, when it is I that comply with them or bring them about, pray own it, and deceive me no longer with any thought but that you hate me. My friendship is too warm and sincere to be trifled with; therefore, if you have any meaning tell it me, or you must allow me to take away that which perhaps you don't care to keep."

The controversy proceeds in the same pathetic strain—if that can be called a controversy of which the reader sees only one side. The pathos of the letters is very unlike anything Pope ever wrote before or after. Perhaps he felt it was the only light in his life which he was thus losing. In the next the injured resignation reaches a still higher tone:—

"Madam,—Your letter gives me a concern which none but one who (in spite of all accidents) is still a friend can feel. I am pleased, however, that anything I said explains my past actions or words in a better sense than you took them. I know in my heart (a very uncorrupt witness) that I was constantly the thing I professed myself to be to you—that was something better, I will venture to say, than most people were capable to be to you or anybody else. As for forgiveness, I am approaching, I hope, to the time and condition in which everybody ought to give it, and to ask it of all the world, I sincerely do so with regard to you, and beg pardon also for that fault of which I taxed others—my vanity—which made me so resenting. . . . I desire extremely to see you both again; yet I believe I shall see you no more—and I sincerely hope as well as think both of you will be glad of it. I therefore wish you may each of you find all you desired I should be in some one whom you may like better to see. In the mean time, I bear testimony of both of you to each other that I have certainly

known you, truly and tenderly, each other's friend, and wish you a long enjoyment of each other's love and affection."

And finally the strain reaches the sublime of unappreciated but always faithful affection :—

"Ladies,—Pray think me sensible of your civility and good meaning in asking me to come to you.

"You will please to consider that my coming or not is a thing indifferent to both of you. But God knows it is far otherwise to me in respect to one of you.

"I scarce ever come but one of two things happens, which equally affect me to the soul—either I make her uneasy or I see her unkind.

"If she has any tenderness, I can only give her every day trouble and melancholy. If she has none, the daily sight of so undeserved a coldness must wound her to death.

"It is forcing one of us to do a very hard and very unjust thing to the other.

"My continuing to see you will, by turns, tease all of us. My staying away can at worst be of ill consequence only to myself.

"And as one of us is to be sacrificed, I believe we are all agreed who shall be the person."

To this rhythmic utterance was the poor poet brought at last. And certainly the quarrel must have been a very desperate one to warrant such despair. Teresa Blount soon after disappears altogether from the story. There is a world of conjecture as to the reason; but the materials for forming a judgment are only those here given—and what it was is never now likely to be known, nor indeed is it of any great importance. Martha continued the poet's bosom friend. If any of his letters could be called familiar, it would be his letters to her. He opened himself to

Mrs Patty if to any human being. He described his journeys to her, and (minutely) the different places he visited; though, when the moment came to make merchandise of these letters, he did not hesitate to cut out the bit of description or the fine sentiment he wanted, and add it to any other that might chance to need embellishment. But to the end of his life he was faithful to her. "Their acquaintance began early," says Dr Johnson—"the life of each was pictured on the other's mind—their conversation, therefore, was endearing; for when they met there was an immediate coalition of congenial notions." And there is something in this long faithfulness of a life to a tie which was enforced by no bonds either of law or custom, which in itself has a certain nobleness. It is supposed that Mrs Martha fell into evil repute with some strait-laced people in consequence of this close friendship; but it is one of the cases in which evil thinking must have been driven to the last strait to compound its fables. If anybody might have been allowed the solace of a sympathetic woman's friendship, it surely should have been the deformed and invalid Pope.

We have, however, left the main stream of his life for this little current of tender sentiment. The publication of his *Essay on Criticism* was the beginning of strife. It was a curious subject for a young poet who had as yet suffered nothing from criticism; and the belligerent impulse of youth, always prone to set things in general to rights, tempted him

to introduce an individual portrait which was unmistakable.

> "Appius reddens at each word you speak,
> And stares tremendous with a threatening eye,
> Like some grim tyrant in old tapestry,"

says the rash and irreverent youth. Dennis, who had written a tragedy on the subject of Appius and Virginia, was one of the foremost critics of the period. No doubt the terse little sketch is very graphic, and, minute as it is, brings the victim before us with appalling distinctness. As soon as it was known who the author was—for the poem was published anonymously—the offended critic retaliated. He conceived himself to have been "attacked in his person instead of his writings," and did not hesitate to repay his assailant in kind. "Inquire," he says, "between Sunninghill and Oakingham for a young short squat gentleman, the very bow of the god of love, and tell me whether he be a proper person to make personal reflections. He may extol the ancients, but he has reason to thank the gods that he was born a modern; for had he been born of Grecian parents, and his father consequently had by law had the absolute disposal of him, his life had been no longer than that of one of his poems—the life of half a day. Let the person of a gentleman of his parts be never so contemptible, his inward man is ten times more ridiculous; it being impossible that his outward form, though it be that of downright mockery, should differ so much from human shape as his unthinking immaterial part does from human

understanding." Such was the amiable manner in which literary quarrels were conducted in the Augustan age.

Of this assault Pope writes with dignified calm, which unfortunately was very shortlived, to his correspondent Mr Caryl. "I shall certainly never make the least reply to him," he says, "not only because you advise me, but because I have ever been of opinion that if a book can't answer for itself to the public, 'tis to no sort of purpose for its author to do it." He repeats a similar sentiment in a letter to Addison, when condoling with him two years later, in 1713, on an attack made by the same scandalous critic. "Your opinion that it is entirely to be neglected would have been my own had it been my own case," he says; "but I felt more warmth here than I did when first I saw his book against myself (though, indeed, in two minutes it made me heartily merry)." These are very fine sentiments from the author of the *Dunciad*. Addison made up to him by a most favourable notice in the *Spectator*, for which Pope wrote him a letter full of the humblest thanks; then, lest he should have deceived himself, and Steele should be the author of the notice, the wily poet sent his acknowledgments also to Addison's coadjutor. The correspondence thus begun with the representatives of what was periodical literature in these days brought Pope temporarily into their circle, and led to the publication of his *Messiah*, and of the well-known and much-commended ode, "A Dying Christian to his Soul," in the *Spectator*.

He maintained a correspondence for some time both with Addison and Steele, and wrote a prologue to the play of *Cato*, by way of homage to the most popular man of letters that ever reigned in England. Pope himself gives a graphic description of its success. "Cato," he says, "was not so much the wonder of Rome in his day as he is of Britons in ours. The numerous and violent claps of the Whig party on one side of the theatre were echoed back by the Tories on the other. This was the case, too, of the prologue writer, who was clapped into a stanch Whig, *sore against my will*, at almost every two lines." The prologue was afterwards printed in the *Spectator*, with some lines of commendation from Steele.

Pope's admiration for Addison, or his natural spite, or some other mingled reason, led him, however, on the same occasion, into a very different kind of performance. Dennis attacked *Cato* in a violent pamphlet, and gave the poet an opportunity of vengeance. He appears first to have offered his services to Addison—"not in any direct reply to such a critic, but only in some little raillery," he explains; "not in defence of you, but in contempt of him." It is evident that Addison discouraged the suggestion, but Pope was not to be balked. The *Narrative of Dr Robert Norris on the Frenzy of J. D.* was published a few months after the first appearance of *Cato*. There is no attempt in this extraordinary production to defend Addison or his play. It is a mere personal attack of the fiercest and coarsest kind, neither graphic nor

amusing, even in its villanous way—an onslaught perhaps worthy the victim, but certainly no credit to the assailant. "Norris was an apothecary or quack in Hatton Garden, where he displayed his sign of the Golden Pestle and Mortar, and professed to have thirty years' experience in the expeditious cure of lunatics." This practitioner is represented as being called to the bedside of Dennis *up three pair of stairs*, in a miserable room, where Lintot the bookseller is found ministering to the raving critic. No piece of local spite launched by one angry vestryman at another could be more contemptible than this ebullition of the greatest poet of the age. It yields the palm of grossness only to another performance of the same description on the *alleged poisoning* of Curll, afterwards produced by the same hand, which is perhaps a little more filthy, though not more despicable. Commentators, of course, are to be found who find humour in these detestable pages, but even Warburton confesses the *Narrative* to have been "a mean performance, but dictated by the most generous friendship;" which, he adds, "meeting in the person defended a heart incapable of the like exertion of virtue, was not received with that acknowledgment which such a service deserved."

Fortunately for Addison's character, he did the very reverse of acknowledging the service. At the risk of making himself a more dangerous enemy than Dennis, he immediately disclaimed all share in the villanous publication. "Mr Addison desires me to

tell you," Steele writes to Lintot, "he wholly disapproves the manner of treating Mr Dennis in a little pamphlet, by way of Dr Norris's account. When he thinks fit to take notice of Mr Dennis's objections to his writings, he will do it in a way Mr Dennis will have no just reason to complain of." What Addison could have done else it is hard to imagine; though the fashion of the time was perhaps as much to blame as the poet who thus demeaned himself. Unfortunately this disavowal sowed seeds of enmity in Pope's mind, which afterwards came to bitter and enduring fruit.

The end of his connection with the editors of the *Spectator* and *Guardian* was marked by another curious little episode in literary history. A series of papers written by Tickell had appeared in the *Spectator*, reviewing the Pastoral poets from Theocritus downwards, in which Phillips was largely quoted, and pronounced to be the legitimate successor of Spenser. It was the same Phillips whose Pastorals had been published along with Pope's in Tonson's *Miscellany*, and the praise is said to have been "dictated by friendship,"—a motive-power of literary criticism with which we are all acquainted. Fired with the injustice done him, Pope wrote for the *Guardian* an affected "Continuation of some former Papers on the Subject of Pastorals," in which he makes an elaborate comparison between his own work and that of Phillips, to the pretended advantage of the latter. Phillips, he says, excels in sim-

plicity, a quality in which even Virgil fails, "who has been thought guilty of too courtly a style. . . . Mr Pope has fallen into the same error as Virgil," he adds, with mock solemnity; and goes on to applaud the judgment of Phillips in describing wolves in England, and the fertility of his genius in producing "finer beds of flowers than the most industrious gardener," his roses, endives, lilies, kingcups, and daffodils all blowing in the same season. "With what simplicity he introduces two shepherds singing alternately," says the malicious critic, instancing two of poor Phillips's nonsense verses; "while our other Pastoral writer," he adds, bringing in with equal vanity and skill two of his own polished and melodious stanzas, "in expressing the same thought, deviates into downright poetry!" He then goes on to instance some specimens of the native English Pastoral, which he applauds his rival for having caught the strain of—

> "Diggon Davy, I bid hur good-day,
> Or Diggon hur is, or I mis-say."

And another, "the most beautiful example of the kind I ever met with"—a west-country ballad, in which Cicely begs her lover—

> "Roger, go vetch the Kee, or else tha Zun
> Will quite bego, bevore a'have half a don."

"After all that has been said," he concludes, "I hope none can think it any injustice to Mr Pope that I forbore to mention him as a Pastoral writer, since, upon the whole, he is of the same class as Moschus

and Bion, whom we have excluded from that rank; and of whose Eclogues, as well as of some of Virgil's, it may be said that (according to the description we have given of this sort of poetry) they are by no means Pastorals, but something better."

This amazing production was inserted by Steele, either in fright or bewilderment, and raised such a ferment as may be supposed, setting the wits agape at its daring insolence and vanity, and driving the pastoral Phillips half-mad with rage. He is said to have put up a rod in the public room at Britton's coffeehouse, with which to take vengeance upon his critic.

While all this was going on, better work proceeded with it, by that curious and blessed inconsistency of human nature which permits the sweetest fruit to grow along with the bitterest. The *Rape of the Lock*, the *Elegy to an unfortunate Lady*, the *Eloise and Abelard*, were all written before Pope had reached the age of thirty. The rank which these poems take in the permanent literature of the country it is very difficult to define. They are too perfect in expression to fall into the second class, and too artificial to rise to the first. But they were undoubtedly the first and most powerful productions of their age in poetry, and were the subject of unbounded panegyric from his contemporaries. It is curious to read the pages of elaborate comment with which they are accompanied. "If it should be thought," says Warton, in one of his many notes to the *Rape*

of the Lock, after a comparison of the occupations of Ariel in the *Tempest* with those of Ariel in Pope's masterpiece, "that Shakespeare has the merit of being the first who imagined proper employments to imaginary persons, yet it must be granted that, by the addition of the most delicate satire to the most lively fancy, Pope, in a following passage, has equalled anything in Shakespeare, or perhaps in any other author." The following passage is this :—

> "Our humble province is to guard the Fair;
> Not a less pleasing though less glorious care,
> To save the powder from too rude a gale,
> Nor let the imprisoned essences exhale;
> To draw fresh colours from the vernal flowers;
> To steal from rainbows ere they drop in showers
> A brighter wash; to curl their waving hairs,
> Assist their blushes, and inspire their airs;
> Nay, oft in dreams invention we bestow
> To change a flounce or add a furbelow."

This is put in comparison with that account of Ariel's employments in which he "runs upon the sharp wind of the north," dives "into the fire," "rides on the curled clouds," and fetches "dew from the still vext Bermoothes!" The commentators again and again remark upon "the exquisite skill, humour, and pleasantry" of the poem, the "beautiful fiction" of this and that passage. "There is much pleasantry in the conduct of this scene," says Warburton. When Pope himself intimates a point at which four lines were added—"Added with great dexterity, beauty, and propriety!" says his admiring editor. In the *Elegy*, the footnotes point out with what "great

tenderness and pathos" the circumstances of the story are touched, and the striking character of the opening metaphor. "Can anything be more naturally pathetic?" again cries Warburton. The same critic tells us, when we reach the Prologue to Addison's *Cato*, that this and the Epilogue to *Jane Shore*, which follows, "are the most perfect models of this species of writing." Thus the poet is accompanied at every step by a chorus of commentators ready to point out any beauty to the reader, who otherwise might miss it. Pope himself published a *Key to the Lock*—a pamphlet intended to insinuate that the poem had a political meaning; but this seems to have been a mere expedient to widen the popularity for which he had an unquenchable thirst.

Great as was the fame of these poems, however, they seem to have produced more praise than pudding to their author; and struck by some whimsy, or moved by some impulse of supposed prudence, he put himself under the charge of his friend Jervase the painter, to learn that art—an undertaking which came to nothing. "All his poetry, we are told, had not brought him a hundred pounds," and the young author wanted money and remunerative work. Long before, Sir William Trumbull, in the depths of the Forest, had suggested to him a translation of the *Iliad*, and the advice had been echoed by Addison and other competent counsellors. It was in the year 1713 that he decided to act upon this suggestion, and began his translation. The work was to be published

by subscription, in six volumes, at one guinea each; and Pope's friends immediately undertook to fill up his list of subscribers. "The author shall not begin to print till I have a thousand guineas for him," said Swift, swaggering in an antechamber at Court. As for the work itself, it was soon found to be no light or easy task. His education makes it impossible to suppose that his own learning could have been equal to the undertaking; and though he assures Addison, at the outset, that "the Greek fortification, upon a nearer approach, does not appear so formidable as it did, and I am almost apt to flatter myself that Homer secretly seems inclined to a correspondence with me in letting me into a good part of his intentions," to his more familiar friends he expressed other sentiments. "In the beginning of my translating Homer," he said to Spence, "I wished anybody would hang me a hundred times. It sat so very heavily on my mind at first, that I often used to dream of it, and even do so sometimes still to this day. My dream usually was that I had set out on a very long journey, puzzled which way to take, and full of fears that I should never get to the end of it." "My time and eyes have been wholly employed upon Homer, whom I almost fear I shall find but one way of imitating, which is in his blindness," he writes to another correspondent. "I am perpetually afflicted with headaches, that very much affect my sight."

Then matters began to get a little better. When he fell into the methodical ways of a translator, whose

work is cut and dry before him, and got into the habit of doing thirty or forty lines in the morning before he got out of bed, his work became easier to him. "Adieu! I am going to forget you," he says to Mr Digby; "this minute you took up all my mind—the next, I shall think of nothing but the reconciliation with Agamemnon and the recovery of Briseis. I shall be Achilles's humble servant these two months. . . . It is not to be expressed how heartily I wish the death of all Homer's heroes, one after another." "When people talk of going to church," he says to his friend Jervase, "I think of sacrifices and libations; when I see the parson, I address him as Chryses, priest of Apollo. . . . I have the greatest proof in nature at present of the amusing power of poetry, for it takes me up so entirely that I scarce see what passes under my nose, and hear nothing that is said about me. . . . I now and then just miss you as I step into bed. This minute, indeed, I want extremely to see you; the next, I shall dream of nothing but the taking of Troy or the recovery of Briseis."

As for the work itself, Dr Johnson, who has no confidence in Pope's scholarship, evidently gives him credit for having come to a clear perception of the sense of his author, chiefly through the translations which abounded in Latin, French, and English. "When he felt himself deficient he sought assistance; and what man of learning would refuse to help him?" Some men of learning were, indeed, employed to help him, one of whom, "the celebrated

Jortin," made notes for him from Eustathius for three or four guineas a-book. Toilsome as the labour was, it had its substantial reward—a reward, perhaps, unprecedented and unequalled in its way, though the actual amount of money gained has been surpassed in other branches of literature. He had two hundred pounds for each volume from the publisher, beside the subscriptions; and the work altogether produced a sum of £5320. "No such encouragement to literature had ever before been manifested," says Mr Carruthers. The poet was at once delivered out of his supposed embarrassments; and was henceforward able to act for himself, to choose his own residence, and feel himself an independent man.

The disposal of this sum is very curious, and will make the mouths of the owners of small fortunes water. "With the produce of this subscription, which he had too much discretion to squander, he secured his future life from want by considerable annuities. The estate of the Duke of Buckingham was found to have been charged with five hundred pounds a-year, payable to Pope, which, doubtless, his translation enabled him to purchase." And, in addition to this, he bought the lease of his house at Twickenham. One rubs one's eyes over the marvellous balance-sheet. Five hundred a-year and a villa out of five thousand pounds! It is tantalising to have such a difference held up before us; the entire capital nowadays would not purchase the villa, not to speak of the annuity. It is curious, at the same time, to note

the way in which this large sum was attained. The subscribers seem to have given what they pleased, though the price was fixed at a guinea the volume; and the warmer the friendship, no doubt, the larger would be the subscription. The King, for instance, gave two hundred pounds, and the Prince one hundred pounds, for their copies. There is a mixture of charity, or at least alms, in the transaction, which might be unpalatable to a modern author; though it hurt nobody's feelings in those days. But how literary enthusiasm should affect rates of interest is a more puzzling question, and the startled observer is left uninformed. The greatest poet now would find it difficult to purchase for five thousand pounds a villa on the Thames, and an income of five hundred a-year.

Before he came to his fortune, however, Pope's family had left Binfield. He writes to a friend, in his magnificent way, that his father and mother "had disposed of their *small estate*" (the twenty acres), and that he had "found an asylum for their old age at Chiswick, under the wing of my Lord Burlington." This asylum was one of a row of houses called Mawson's Buildings, which, it is said, still remain near the landing-place. Here the father died to whom Pope had been a good son, and whose death he lamented with great feeling.

There is a touching little note extant addressed to Martha Blount which bears all the traces of genuine grief: "My poor father died last night. Believe, since I don't forget you this moment, I never shall,"

he writes, with rare and affecting simplicity, to the friend of his whole life. Every evidence unites in proving him a good son, as well as a steady and constant friend.

Such little touches as these—so few, so brief, so scantily sown along the arid course of years—are all the traces of a real human life that are to be found in Pope's history. Let us pause once more at the Twickenham villa, procured by his new wealth, which, in the barren tale filled from beginning to end with shadows instead of realities, may be supposed to stand for the happiness of the poet's life.

The house which now occupies the site, it is right to say, has nothing to do with Pope. It is not even enlarged from the nucleus of his little house, like the villa at Binfield. The original habitation, which consisted of "a small hall paved with stone, and two small parlours on each side," with a corresponding upper floor—the stereotyped arrangement still faithfully retained by the homely British architect—has totally disappeared. A stately house, with wings, and accommodation for a family of distinction, as auctioneers say, looks now over the pretty lawns upon the everlasting river, which takes no heed of such changes. Most people know that suburban paradise. Of its kind there is no lovelier spot. The soft slopes of Richmond rise close at hand; the broad, silvery thread of the Thames gives life and interest to the country. Noble cedars, for which the neighbourhood is famous, stand here and there upon the perfect

lawns; pensive willows sweep their long branches to the water's edge; here and there the foliage breaks and reveals to the spectator in his boat, like a sudden secret, a house withdrawn in its little open, amid velvet turf and flowering shrubs and brilliant flower-beds. It is nature, trained and trimmed and polished to the last perfection, but still it is nature; a full, great, silent, eloquent river—a world of stately, responsive trees—and, at every corner you turn, a human habitation, concealed with dainty art from the ruder side of the world, revealing itself with sudden frankness, with open windows, with family groups upon its lawns, to the friendly stream. It is probable that Pope had felt the charm of the river in his temporary residence at Chiswick. Its soft monotony of rhythm must have found some answer in the mind which could give vent to streams of verse almost as perfect. In this sweet retirement he established himself in the end of the year 1717, being then nearly thirty, a careful, thrifty, and not unacute man of business. His father had left him, he says, "the ticklish management of so narrow a fortune, that any one false step would be fatal." But he had his five thousand pounds beside, and, it is evident, was very well to do. The house was "small and bad," Horace Walpole tells us.

> "Close to the grotto of the Twickenham bard—
> Too close—adjoins a tanner's yard,"

says a contemporary epigram; but probably Pope was not very fastidious. His small parlours were

enough for him, and his river and trees could not be surpassed. "It was a little bit of ground of five acres, enclosed with three lanes, and seeming nothing," Horace informs us. "Pope had twisted and twirled, and rhymed, and harmonised this, till it appeared two or three sweet little lawns, opening and opening beyond one another, and the whole surrounded with thick, impenetrable woods." This process cost him, his servant reports, £6000, which is another proof of the curious multiplication of money in his fortunate hands. The pride of the establishment, however, was a grotto, made up with spar, fossils, and bits of looking-glass, and which, to the altered taste of the present age, sounds very like a bit of Cremorne. Pope himself describes it with pride to his friend Edward Blount for the edification of certain young ladies who, "in their green gowns," had been used to trip about the little lawn. To do him justice, the grotto was not pure invention on his part, but an expedient to make the most of an underground passage from one part of his grounds to the other, his limited space being cut in two by the highroad to London. "From the river Thames you see through my arch up a walk of the wilderness, to a kind of open temple wholly composed of shells in the rustic manner," he says; "and from that distance under the temple you look down through a sloping arcade of trees, and see the sails on the river passing suddenly and vanishing, as through a perspective glass." The delusive splendour which it was the poet's way to throw over all

his surroundings, has its ordinary dilating effect, no doubt, upon Twickenham as upon his former home. The picture he leaves us is one of an elegant retirement, not without fantastic traces of the bad taste of the time, but redeemed by the sweep of green lawn and fine trees—a house of refined freedom, with open doors to all the worthiest, and a simple, liberal, refined hospitality.

"Know, all the distant din that world can keep
Rolls o'er my grotto and but soothes my sleep;
There my retreat the best companions grace,
Chiefs out of war and statesmen out of place.
There St John mingles with my friendly bowl
The feast of reason and the flow of soul;
And he whose lightning pierced the Iberian pines,
Now forms my quincunz, and now ranks my vines."

Nor is there wanting lowlier company than Bolingbroke and Peterborough. Here is a still more extended sketch of the plentiful simplicity of the poet's house. He declares himself as happy in his elegant humility as if he had been (as once he hoped, "in South Sea days") the lord of thousands; or (with the usual pleasant delusion about little Binfield),—

"*In forest planted by a father's hand,*
As in five acres now of rented land,
Content with little, I can peddle here,
On broccoli and mutton round the year.
But ancient friends, though poor or out of play,
That touch my bell, I cannot turn away.
'Tis true no turbots dignify my boards,
But gudgeons, flounders,—what my Thames affords.
To Hounslow Heath I point, and Bansted Down,
Thence comes my mutton, and these chicks my own.
From yon old walnut-tree a shower shall fall,
And grapes long lingering on my only wall,

And figs from standard and espalier join—
The devil's in you if you cannot dine.

. . . . .

My lands are sold, my father's house is gone;
I'll hire another's; is not that my own,
And yours, my friends? through whose free opening gate
None comes too early, none departs too late."

This profusion of hospitality is curiously commented upon by Dr Johnson's account of Pope's remarkable frugality, which was shown, says his biographer, "in a niggardly reception of his friends and scantiness of entertainment; as when he had two guests in his house, he would set at supper a single pint upon the table, and having himself taken two small glasses, would retire and say, 'Gentlemen, I leave you to your wine!'"

It was at Twickenham that the one little gleam of passion which seems for a time to have flashed over his life came to an end. If he loved Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, or if he only admired her, it is hard to tell; but there are signs which lead the observer to suppose that the beautiful and brilliant woman had actually struck the rock and called forth some natural gush of emotion. The following verses would almost prove such a miracle; they were evidently written while he was employed in the beautifying of his gardens and house:—

"Ah, friend, 'tis true—this truth you lovers know—
In vain my structures rise, my gardens grow;
In vain fair Thames reflects the double scenes
Of hanging mountains and of sloping greens.
Joy dwells not there; to happier seats it flies,
And only dwells where Wortley casts her eyes.

What are the gay parterre, the checkered shade,
The morning bower, the evening colonnade,
But soft recesses of uneasy minds,
To sigh unheard into the passing winds?
So the struck deer in some sequestered part
Lies down to die, the arrow at his heart.
There, stretched unseen in coverts hid from day,
Bleeds drop by drop, and pants his life away."

Not long after these beautiful verses were written, the poet branded the object of his admiration in such couplets as the critic cannot quote. The cool and concentrated hate with which he impales too many other victims is an altogether different sentiment from the furious rage with which he flies at the name of Sappho whenever he can bring it in. If it was unrequited love which produced such venomous fury, it is, Heaven be praised! a rare exhibition. The story is too fragmentary to be entered into; but the two names must be associated as long as the literature of that strange, squabbling, abusive age continues to interest the world.

Pope was at the height of his fame and prosperity when he arranged the smooth lawns, and planted the artful bosquets about his little Twickenham house; he had published his best works, and got successfully through his hardest bit of literary toil; and honour and success had rewarded him. And yet, in the midst of all those softening influences of personal wellbeing, the fountain of bitterness was again opened. It flowed forth first upon Addison, who had again, as Pope believed, sinned against him. Tickell,

one of Addison's literary followers, was, it appears, engaged on a translation of the first books of the *Iliad* when Pope took up the same work. When both books appeared, Addison, out of friendship for Tickell or jealousy of Pope, or inadvertence, or bad taste, declared that though "both were good, Tickell's was the best that had ever been written." This opinion sent the poet ablaze; wild plans of revenge seem to have shot through his brain. He determined to publish together "the four versions of Dryden, Mainwaring, Tickell, and his own, that they might be readily compared and fairly estimated." He intended to publish a vigorous criticism of Tickell's translation, "and had marked a copy which I have seen," says Dr Johnson, "in all places that appeared defective." In short, he went mad with mortified vanity, jealousy, and rage. Balked in both those dignified and charitable intentions, the whole bitterness of his heart poured forth upon Addison. What was probably a mere expression of friendship and favouritism, gradually grew and magnified under Pope's gaze till it became a deliberate and malicious intention to forestall him in his work, and cut him off from his reward. He got at last to believe, or to pretend to believe, that the other translation was Addison's own, and not Tickell's; and the result of all his gathering rage was the well-known satire, of which almost every line has become a proverb, and which has served the purpose of many another mortified and embittered soul:—

"Were there one whose fires
True genius kindles and fair fame inspires,
Blest with each talent, and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live at ease;
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear like the Turk no brother near the throne,
View him with scornful yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caused himself to rise,
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering teach the rest to sneer,
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike.
. . . . . .
Like Cato give his little senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause;
While wits and templars every sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise—
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep if Atticus were he?"

This piece of concentrated abuse Pope says he sent to Addison in a letter, animadverting freely on his sins towards himself. "He used me very civilly ever after," says the poet. But unfortunately Pope's word does not carry the weight necessary to win faith for such a story; and there is no evidence to support it. It was only after Addison was dead and incapable of response that this character of him glided into print. Its power and intensity are extraordinary; and probably, of its kind, nothing in literature is more perfect. Atterbury is said to have considered it the best thing Pope had ever done. "Since you now, therefore, know where your real strength lies, I hope you will not suffer that talent to lie unemployed," the Bishop writes, with a political appreciation of the bitter gift; and the advice was fatally well followed.

Dennis and Curll had called forth from Pope's hands only the gross abuse and personality which came natural at the period; but his enemies were henceforth to be treated with sharper and daintier weapons. The verses on Addison were published in 1722, and already two other unfortunates gasped impaled in his company: "Bufo," Lord Halifax, and "Sporus," Lord Hervey. Lady Mary, the Duchess of Marlborough, and a host of lesser victims, afterwards followed. To Pope and to his friends this kind of personal crucifixion, which is now banished, if it exists at all, to the lowest class of scribblers, or to the utterances of the parish muse, seems to have been considered a perfectly legitimate literary exercise. Swift employed the same expedient freely, and Gay built his little fortune and his troubles at once on the same disreputable foundation. There is a comedy called *Three Hours after Marriage*, in which Gay is said to have been aided by Pope and Arbuthnot. "Fossile the husband was intended to ridicule Dr Woodward; Sir Tremendous, the greatest critic of the day, was Dennis," &c. &c. The popular mind has scarcely yet lost the stinging impression of these social treacheries, and still retains a lingering distrust of the writer who has it in his power to hold up his neighbour to the laughter of the world. But fortunately the fashion is over, and poets do not now promote their own reputation by ruthless slaughter of the good fame of others.

The successful *Iliad* led to a translation of the *Odyssey*, in which Pope was assisted by "two of his friends," Elijah Fenton and Broome, whose labours, however, were acknowledged in a very niggardly way. They translated twelve books between them, but were credited in the preface with only five. For this piece of work Pope received £2885—after paying £700 to his assistants; but we are not informed whether he laid it out to equal advantage with his first gains.

None of these works, however, serious as they were, occupied so much of his life or filled his thoughts half so intensely as did the *Dunciad*, a work which has now little more than an archæological interest. The idea of a grand epic, mock-heroic, of the same character as that which had already brought him such fame, embodying the reign of Dulness and her chief leaders and champions, had long pleased Pope's imagination. And it was an idea which naturally charmed his friends, living as they did in a kind of Ishmaelitish warfare with everybody who opposed or threatened them. With such a gladiator as Swift by his side, the natural instinct which makes any creature possessed of a sting use it with prompt and unhesitating readiness, was not likely to be softened in the irritable little poet. But the men he satirised are dead and gone beyond even the power of the poet to bring them back to life—their names, as he himself pro-

phesied, last but as flies in amber, shut up in the meshes of his verse.

> "The things, we know, are neither rich nor rare,
> But wonder how the devil they got there."

What is Tibbalds to us far down in the nineteenth century, or Phillips, or Dennis, or Cibber? To Pope they were his enemies, and therefore important; but not even the charms of his verse can make them interesting. While Pope was busy about this thankless and unworthy labour, Swift was with him at Twickenham; and here is the picture he gives—a glimpse unusually distinct—of the odd little workshop, where poems were made and reputations killed:—

> "Pope has the talent, well to speak,
> But not to reach the ear;
> His loudest voice is low and weak,
> The Dean too deaf to hear.
>
> Awhile they on each other look,
> Then different studies choose;
> The Dean sits plodding on a book,
> Pope walks and courts the Muse.
>
> Now backs of letters, though designed
> For those who more will need 'em,
> Are filled with hints, and interlined,
> Himself can hardly read 'em.
>
> Yet to the Dean this share allot,
> He claims it by a canon,
> That without which a thing is not,
> Is *causa sine quâ non.*
>
> Thus, Pope, in vain you boast your wit,
> For had our deaf divine
> Been for your conversation fit
> You had not writ a line."

The serious works produced in the latter part of

Pope's life were his epistles, and specially the *Essay on Man*, which Bolingbroke is supposed to have inspired. It was published anonymously, with one of the author's usual wiles, his friends being employed to go about whispering that now at last Pope had a real rival. He himself, in his preface, hypocritically (but always with characteristic self-conceit) professes that he "imitates no man," and "would be thought to vie with no man in these epistles; *particularly with the noted author of two lately published.*" This trick put out the instinct of the public; and many other artifices of the same kind, elaborate appeals to critics here and there what they thought of it, kept up for a time the illusion. The poet, however, had one prick of an amusing kind. He inquired of Mallet, who had become one of his retinue, what new things there were in literature? Nothing, he was answered, worth notice; only a thing called an *Essay on Man*, poor in poetry and in philosophy. The furious little poet, unprepared, started up in arms. "I wrote it," he said, in sudden rage; and the reader is glad he had that one requital of his own perpetual sting. Other epistles, addressed to various persons, preceded and followed the Essay; the *Imitations of Horace*, with all their provoking stabs, and the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, in which lay, keen and bitter, the posthumous murder of Addison. All of them were sharpened by darts of offence to everybody who had ever crossed his path, and to some who had not. The assault on the Duchess of Marlborough,

in the character of Atossa (to withdraw which he is proved to have accepted a thousand pounds: he took the money and printed the character!), and that on the Duke of Chandos, persons who had never harmed him, must have been done in the mere wantonness of mischief. His hand was against every man, except, indeed, the few who praised and supported him, to whom he was, after his kind, a warm friend. To Warburton, who defended the Essay from imputations of scepticism, he was the means of bringing high advance in fortune; and to all appearance he was charitable, and ready to give even above his means; but it is evident that the temptation of the sting was as much too much for Pope as it is to the wasp who pursues us when the windows are open, and the domestic table exposed in the *déshabille* of summer. Whoever touched him, looked at him, interposed between him and the sun, suffered on the spot, without warning or time to escape. And some of his finest efforts are unquestionably contained in these attacks; their conciseness, and close, desperate, well-aimed blows, are perfect in their way.

The society at Twickenham during all this period, notwithstanding "the single pint" for supper, must have been as brilliant as wit and fame could make it. Swift paid one visit of five months to his friend; and Bolingbroke, Peterborough, and Chesterfield, all frequented the little house. Voltaire, when a visitor at St John's House of Dawley, also visited his brother poet, and talked, it is said, so grossly, that Mrs Pope

was driven from the table. And there, too, Gay, Arbuthnot, and a hundred lesser lights, twinkled with mild radiance. On one of Swift's visits a joint miscellany was planned, which the Dean, Gay, and Pope compounded together. In their preface to this joint performance the poets complain that they have been "extremely ill used by some booksellers," who had given to the world every loose paper in prose or verse, obtained from the authors by importunity, or by the indiscretion of friends, and that even the papers of the dead had been ransacked to find letters; a curious statement, for which there seems to have been no sort of foundation. It would "seem to have been hazarded with a view of preparing for some subsequent publication of letters," says Mr Carruthers, who has set forth all the curious intrigues which followed. This was indeed a favourite subject of complaint with Pope, whose restless vanity pleased itself with such a supposed evidence of his importance. He plays with the notion in many of his letters, as if he loved it.

"This letter (like all mine) will be a rhapsody," he says, affectedly, when writing to Swift; "it is many years ago since I wrote as a wit. . . . I write to you more negligently—that is, more openly—and what all but such as love one another would call writing worse. I smile to think how Curll would be bit, were our epistles to fall into his hands, and how gloriously they would fall short of every ingenious reader's expectations! . . . Some letters of mine (to Wycherley) the booksellers have got and printed. . . . I don't much approve of it, though there is nothing in it for me to be ashamed of, because I will not be ashamed of anything I

do not do myself, or of anything that is not immoral, but merely dull; as, for instance, if they printed this letter I am now writing, which they easily may, if the underlings at the post-office please to take a copy of it."

From all this it is easy to perceive that, long accustomed as Pope ought to have been by this time to his fame, it still sat on him like a ploughboy's Sunday clothes. He wanted to be sure that everybody knew it was he, and saw his finery, and pleased himself with the idea of a universal curiosity, the very importance of which was a tribute to his greatness. At a later period, when Gay, whom he loved, was dead, and Swift dying, and Bolingbroke in France, he took the most curious means of securing for himself the notoriety he loved. Let us hope that it was the weariness of waning life, and the loneliness that had fallen upon him, which moved the poet to so strange a diversion for his solitude. It is thus it came about.

In the year 1733, Pope being then a man of about forty-five, precisely at the age when men in general are most scrupulous about the privacy of their personal life, a mysterious communication was made to Curll the bookseller, touching a large collection of the poet's letters from his youth to the year 1727. Curll communicated with Pope himself on the subject, informing him that he meant to publish them; and Pope's reply was made by advertisements in the newspapers, proclaiming to all the world that he had nothing to do with Curll, that he knew of no such collection of letters, and that he should not trouble

himself about the matter. Finally, after much mysterious communication between the publisher and his unknown correspondents, the book, *already printed* by these darkling conspirators, was given to the public. It was advertised with the names of the persons to whom and from whom the letters came: "Mr Pope's Literary Correspondence for thirty years; being a collection of letters, regularly digested, written to him by the Right Hon. the late Earl of Halifax, Earl of Burlington, Secretary Craggs, Sir William Trumbull, &c. &c. &c." Curll's advertisement was a direct infringement of a rule of the House of Lords, which prohibited the publication of any peer's letters without his consent, and as such was brought under the notice of the House; upon which the books were seized, the printer and publisher summoned to the bar, and notoriety in its fullest and sweetest extent obtained on all hands, Pope himself meanwhile fulminating in the newspapers against the surreptitious publication, and offering rewards to the apocryphal persons who had betrayed him. His next move was made with the indignant grandeur of injured virtue. "Whereas several booksellers have printed surreptitious and incorrect editions of letters as mine, some of which are not so, and others interpolated, . . . I think myself under a necessity to publish such of the said letters as are genuine, with the addition of some others of a nature less insignificant," he proclaims, in princely guise, in the *London Gazette*. The trial had succeeded more perfectly than he could have hoped.

"Being desirous of printing his letters, and not knowing how to do without imputation of vanity what has in this country been done very rarely, Pope," says Dr Johnson, "contrived an appearance of compulsion, that when he could complain that his letters were surreptitiously published he might decently and defensively publish them himself."

The artifice succeeded, but it does not seem to have deceived any one. The world in general, always so much better aware than the juggler supposes of the way in which his tricks are elaborated, saw the hand behind the scenes that moved all, and knew for what motive the House of Lords was moved to question, and the newspapers rang with counter-advertisements. But the poet, blowing his own trumpet till his cheeks ached, did not perceive that everybody saw him, and saw through his inventions. The revelation which he affected to be forced from him, and which he pretended was honest and complete, was in reality as careful a work of art as any he had produced. The letters were squeezed and pared and fitted into shape like the feet of Cinderella's sisters. Names were transposed, sentiments transferred—the apologies, professions, and offers of friendship made to one man were handed over to another—the verses addressed to one woman made to do service for a second—a hundred tricks played with the correspondence which remorseless time, and the eyes of critics, and the British Museum, have pitilessly discovered. The "surreptitious edition" was

as carefully "corrected" and manipulated as the genuine one. Never was there a more elaborate offering laid on the altars of vanity, and seldom has so curious an incident occurred in literary history. "Pope's private correspondence thus promulgated filled the nation with praises of his candour, tenderness, and benevolence, the purity of his purposes, and the fidelity of his friendship." He had thus the gratification of, as it were, posthumous praise and personal glorification while still in the prime of his life, and with possible laurels still before him to win.

Pope's prime, however, was not like that of a man of ordinary health and size. He had been forced, or had forced himself, into premature bloom, and premature decay had followed. He who had been a precocious man and philosopher at sixteen, was, at forty-six, old, querulous, and decaying. "The changes of the weather affect me much," he writes. "The mornings are my life; in the evenings I am not dead, indeed, but sleep, and am stupid enough. I love reading still better than conversation, but my eyes fail, and at the hours when most people indulge in company I am tired, and find the labour of the past day sufficient to weigh me down; so I hide myself in bed, as a bird in his nest, much about the same time." His health failed gradually, and infirmities crept upon him. Yet up to almost the last year of his life he was still employed, with the aid of Warburton, in slaughtering with cruel tortures every new butterfly that fluttered across his path, every fly that

had ever ventured to buzz at Pope. Revenge went to the length of the tiniest insect; and not the most elaborate system of notes can wake any interest in the bosom of the living reader as to the dead triflers of the *Dunciad*. But though thus remorseless and vindictive to his critics, the poet clung to his friends with pathetic fidelity. He made efforts to visit them, though his poor little frame was dropping to pieces. "Yes, I would see you as long as I can see you," he writes to Bolingbroke, "and then shut my eyes upon the world as a thing worth seeing no longer. If your charity would take up a small bird that is half-dead of the frost, and set it chirping for half an hour, I will jump into my cage and put myself into your hands to-morrow at any hour you send." Up till very nearly the last, he still managed to glide along the river-side in his boat as far as Battersea, where Bolingbroke was, and was carried up in his chair to dine with his friend. The reader will see more trace of a human nature in those last glimpses of the dying poet than have been visible through all his previous life. The husk peels off with the long friction of time; with some the process is shorter, with some longer. Pope had so small a soul, so tiny a central point of humanity, that the very last covering of all has almost fallen away before the spirit shows. But it does become visible at the end. As he sits in the sun on his terrace talking feebly with his friends—smiling faintly at himself, the poor old bird half-dead

in the frost—casting faint looks of faithful friendship at Martha Blount, who, they say, was indifferent—and at Bolingbroke, whose heart was touched—a certain interest gathers round him. "It was very observable," during this last illness, that Mrs Blount's coming in gave him a new turn of spirits or a temporary strength. She was a little lively old woman by that time, in the eyes of the younger generation; but that did not affect her charm to her friend. Gleams of a spiritual atmosphere about him appear faintly in those waning days,—he saw strange colours in the rooms, and an arm stretching out from the wall, it is said, at one time, and asked eagerly, "What's that?" Then, with a smile of pleasure, added, "It was a vision!" Bolingbroke wept, crying out with theatrical sentiment, "Oh, great God, what is man?" but the dying poet made no bewailing over his own state. "I am dying of a hundred good symptoms," he said, with a certain soft humour, when they mocked him, as injudicious friends will do, with assurances that he was better. Thus he died, so quietly that no one could tell the moment, in his own house, with kindness and almost love around him; almost snatching a kind of life from the touch of death—growing, as he crossed the threshold into the darkness, at last into the semblance of a man.

There is, as has been often said, an unseen tragedy in almost every life. Here there is no tragedy to speak of except the technical one, that the story ends,

as all stories must, in death. But the reason is, that Pope had no life, no personal existence, no thread of individual fate: he worked, he studied, he produced poems greater than his nature; he hated, reviled, and beguiled his fellow-creatures; he magnified and deified himself, and that genius, which, divine thing as it is, can yet exist amidst so much garbage; and he liked with sufficient faithfulness a few people in the world, who were very good, very obliging, flattering, and satisfactory to him. But he neither lived in his own person, nor threw himself heart and soul into any other life; nothing tragic, nothing serious, no real interest to any human soul, is in him. A certain curiosity about the habits and natural history of the strange little phenomenon, a critic's interest in his poetry, a historian's attention to the curious phase of national life across which his little shadow passed —such is all that can be given to Pope.

In literature he stands unique in England. His age, with its sharp emulation of wits, its graces and gracelessness, its frightful licence of speech and insensibility to all social codes of honour, is reflected in his pages as in the pitiless clearness of a mirror. Some of his satires rise to the very sublime of character-painting. In all other ways he has been surpassed—in this he stands supreme; and thousands, we might say millions, in both hemispheres, quote daily those matchless bitter lines without knowing whom they quote. As a poet he wrought out his vein. Nobody

could venture to come after, except in humble paths of imitation, so great a master of his art. He was the culmination and perfect blossom of his school. It had to fall when he was gone, nothing greater being possible, and to leave the way open to a poetry less polished and less correct; more spontaneous in genius, and less elaborate in art.

VI

THE YOUNG CHEVALIER

THE YOUNG CHEVALIER.

THERE are some landscapes in the world in which foreign memories, alien to the place, and in some cases less touching and momentous than the natural local associations, thrust themselves in, and obscure to the spectator at once the nationality and individual character of the spot. The English traveller, when he climbs the height of Tusculum, has a scene before him full of the grandest memories of a past which is the common inheritance of the whole civilised world. His boyish lessons, his youthful studies, if they have done anything for him, have qualified him to identify every hillock, and hear a far-off voice out of every tomb. Or if it is not old but modern Rome that charms him, there are a hundred lights on that Campagna, a thousand influences of sound and sense about, enough to move the least imaginative soul. Rome lying distant on the great plain—and the dome that Buonarotti hung between earth and heaven standing out the one thing visible, full of

suggestions of the treasures lying under and about it —are sufficient to overbrim the eager brain. How is it that, as we stand upon the wistful plateau with that great scene before us, Rome and her memories fade from our eyes? "Shrivelling like a parched scroll," the plain rolls up and passes away. The Highland hills all black with storms, the lonely, desolate, northern seas, the wild moors and mountain-passes, rise up a sad phantasmagoria over the grey olives and clustering vines. It is the wild pibroch that rings in our ears, it is the heather that rustles below our feet, and the chill of the north that breathes into our faces. Why? Because yonder in the Duomo a line of inscription has caught the traveller's eye, obliterating Frascati and Rome, and all Italian thoughts: "Karolus Odoardus, Filius Jacobi." These are the words; and there lies the high heart mouldered into dust which once beat against the breast of the Young Chevalier!

It was in Rome that the life of Charles Stuart began, as it ended, in exile, in an unhappy distracted household, torn asunder by domestic dissensions, divided between a disappointed, injured, high-spirited wife—sometimes in open, sometimes in tacit rebellion—and an unfaithful exacting husband, weak, but tyrannical, wicked, yet religious as princes sometimes are permitted to be. Strangely enough, though Queen Clementina, as she was called, would seem to have been of a higher and stronger character than her husband, there is no reference to her in any of her son's

letters, and little in the contemporary records. James, whatever his sins were, and they were many, seems to have kept, at least, the affection of his children. But it is impossible to imagine a worse atmosphere for the growth of young lives. The melancholy dispossessed Family was surrounded by a little coterie of a court—a community which, under the best of circumstances, has much of the pettiness, personal squabbles, rumours, and gossip of a village; and which was embittered and set on edge in this case by the fact that its members were discontented and broken men, whose hopes and hearts were elsewhere, and to whom intrigue and conspiracy were daily bread. Plots and counter-plots of all kinds went on in the unquiet household. Every day a gloomy train attended the mimic king across the piazza to the Church of the Holy Apostles, where he went to pay his devotions. Meddlers of all kinds, ruined soldiers, broken-down statesmen, shifty priests, surrounded the boys thus growing up to an inheritance of false hopes and idle greatness. The bells of the Santi Apostoli, and many a church beside, kept ringing in their young ears with unbroken monotony; the flat ceremonials of the priestly court, of which they were half-dependants, mocked the exiles. Now and then they gave a concert at their palace, to which the wandering English cubs, with their "governors," of whom Lord Chesterfield and Lady Mary Wortley give so uncomfortable a description, came in crowds to stare at the handsome gallant lad, condescending to play for their

amusement, who was, so far as blood and hereditary right went, the undoubted heir of England. And sometimes the poor young Princes would rush forth across the Campagna to cheat their inactivity with the commotion of a hunting-party—poor copy of the stir of life. But all this while out in the world cannons were roaring, battles fighting. Young William of Cumberland, as yet unmarked by his terrible nickname, was getting himself glory at Dettingen at the head of those English who were not *his* countrymen, that he should have the credit of them. It requires little imagination to conceive how this contrast must have rankled in the high, courageous, adventurous soul of the young Stuart, rightful leader of these Englishmen, who, but for the folly of his fathers, might have been at their head instead of the Hanoverian. When these events were happening, Charles was five-and-twenty, and had been, no doubt, for years consuming his heart in the tedious bustle of the ecclesiastical capital. All his biographers echo the general note of wonder how a prince, trained under soft Italian skies, amid the supposed effeminacy of Italian customs, could have been fit for the hardships of his after-life. But it is evident that he had trained himself, by such experience as that climate and those customs give, to bear heat and cold, the two great extremes, accustomed himself to long walks and scant fare, and all the natural hardships which fall in the way of a hunter among the hills. Italy is not like Scotland; but the one country has by times chills as

bitter as are ever known in the other, and danger and privation are the same everywhere.

It was in the depth of the winter of 1744 that the long-expected call to action came to the eager young man. France, with plans of her own in her mind, had suddenly bethought herself of the Stuarts, by way, not necessarily of restoring them, but of occupying the attention of England with her own affairs, and making her recall not her troops only, but the money, with which an obsequious Ministry enabled King George to subsidise all the world. The summons was secret and sudden, known only to the father and son and their most intimate counsellors. Out of the brief overwhelming excitement of the moment a few words reach us full of natural feeling. "I trust, by the aid of God"—said the youth, trembling with hope and eagerness, as he set out on his enterprise, to the old man who had gone through that phase and left his hopes behind him ages ago in the cold blank of the past—"that I shall soon be able to lay three crowns at your Majesty's feet." The father answers tenderly, out of his life-in-death. "Be careful of yourself, my dear boy. I would not lose you for all the crowns in the world," he says, with, one can imagine, what smile and what sigh! Weak, feeble, futile old Pretender—and yet with a heart to be wrung for his boy, like other men.

It was on a night in January 1744—the 9th—that the young Chevalier set forth on one of the most extraordinary, splendid, and hopeless expeditions

ever recorded in history. "A little after midnight," a heavy coach, followed by a groom leading another horse, rattled through the stony Roman streets to the Lateran Gate. The keys had been left overnight with the captain of the guard, that no hindrance might be given to the Prince's hunting-party, on which his eagerness carried him forth so early. Gentle Prince Henry, he who was afterwards Cardinal York, was left behind asleep, and, knowing nothing, set out leisurely in the morning to meet the fiery young Nimrod who had preceded him, little thinking on what wild chase it was that his elder brother had gone forth. The chaise and the faithful groom behind went on, across the wintry Campagna in the deep darkness, till they came to the stony causeway, everlasting like all old Roman work, which ascends the Alban hill. There, under some pretext, the young Adventurer left his companion in the coach and mounted his horse. The story goes on to tell how he stood still "at the turning," alone with his faithful Norman groom, until the heavy coach, with Dunbar in it, who for his part pretended to know nothing, lumbered on upon the resounding road towards the hunting-tryst. When the carriage was gone, Charles Edward turned his horse's head the other way, and, facing towards Frascati, towards Florence and Paris and England, "gave his bridle-reins a shake," and escaped into the world.

When this romantic incident occurred, the artificial world held on its babbling course at home as if there

had been no such startling primitive chances in existence. The armies and commanders of England were on the Continent fighting for other contested successions, and hiring German troops to aid their arms. The Ministers in London were busy making treaties and granting subsidies, struggling to please King George, whose heart was rather that of an Elector of Hanover than of a King of England. The world of fashion fluttered and amused itself as one reads in Horace Walpole's letters, its Tories pretending to hope for, and its Whigs affecting to fear, the exiled Stuarts in their distant retirement; but one party just as ready as the other with fine birthday clothes at the Hanoverian Court, and traditionary Jacobitism falling into the constitutional opposition of more recent times. Never was there an age when men were less likely to sacrifice themselves, and put their fortunes and lives in peril, for a banished and half-forgotten King. There were a hundred solid reasons why George and his family should lie heavy on the English mind. He was no Englishman, nor ever pretended to be. He had none of the qualities that make a man personally popular, except courage. He gave the world an example of dull profligacy on the one side, and unnatural family discords on the other, such as the public mind, however little toned to virtue, invariably resents. In all his public acts he made it apparent that his new kingdom was nothing to him in comparison with his native principality—"a province to a despicable electorate," as Pitt boldly

and bitterly said. Yet so deeply had the dangers of civil war stamped themselves on men's minds; or so bent were all on personal wellbeing, safety, and such success as was practicable; or so dull was the level of public feeling at a moment when no public leader possessed the thrill of sympathetic genius, and every man schemed and struggled for himself, that notwithstanding all the drawbacks that attended the Hanoverian race, no touch of ancient love seems to have awakened in the English heart towards the young, noble, and hopeful Pretender, who thus set out with his life in his hand to claim his hereditary place. The whole nation, occupied with its own affairs, and sullenly awaiting the result of its last experiment in kingmaking, abstracted itself from all new contests, and looked on, angry to have its quiet disturbed, indignant at the thought of new expenses, unmoved by the romance of the situation or by the daring of the Adventurer.

At this moment of his career there can be no doubt that of all the young princes in Europe Charles Edward was personally one of the most promising. His education had been bad, but his mind was open. He was full of noble natural gifts, if not of intellect at least of character—a gracious, magnanimous, valiant gentleman, with all the charm of manner and person peculiar to his race. There seems every reason to believe that such a nature, sweetened by prosperity, might have come to a finer development than ever Stuart yet had attained since the first James of Scot-

land, the poet of the race. But such was not the intention of Providence, in all things so inscrutable, and in none more so than in the determination of the influences which cramp or guide the development of character. England did but stand and look on while the young Chevalier drew near her coasts, greeting him with the movement of alarm which might be supposed to startle a shopkeeper at the appearance of any riot likely to put his goods and traffic in danger—putting up her shutters, locking her till, in unheroic tremor and still more unheroic calm, awaiting the issue. The noblest of Jacobite families, they who had kept up anxious relations with the exiled Court for years (and there was scarcely one family of importance, scarcely one eager statesman, who had not one time or other offered services to or excited the expectations of that Court), adopted this attitude. So long as nothing was to be done, they were content to speak of the Prince's advent as if it would bring them salvation; but as soon as he appeared, the warmest prayer they had to utter was, that he would keep away from them and depart from their coasts. Men who are in possession of all the best gifts of fortune may be pardoned for not rushing blindly into an enterprise which is likely to conduct them to the Tower and the block; but yet it must be recollected that the men who thus stood apart and let their Prince dash himself to pieces against the great wall of a nation's passive resistance, had given him for years a theoretical allegiance, had supported his pretensions,

kept up his hopes, and maintained before his eyes a gleam of perpetual possibility. They were all waiting, they professed, for the moment when it would be wise to make the attempt. Such waiting was no matter of life and death to them. Their circumstances were in no way desperate—their lands and livings were secured, and even public life was not shut against them. But with him it was life or death.

Charles Edward went first to Paris, where he was kept for some time in great retirement, seeing nobody, not even the King—and afterwards to Gravelines, a little fortified town on the dreary line of coast between Calais and Dunkirk, where he lived in more utter seclusion still, attending the preparations for the expedition and watching their progress. From this spot, for the first time, amid the mists and storms of winter, he looked across the angry Channel upon England with such thoughts as may be conceived. On that monotonous shore, lingering upon the margin of the wild sea, catching glimpses, as the clouds lifted and fell, of the island-kingdom of his forefathers, the Adventurer becomes his own historian; but his record is of facts only, not of sentiments and feelings. His sole attendant was a Highland gentleman, one of the busy conspirators of the time, in whom he seems to have been able to repose scanty faith. "The situation I am in is very particular," he writes, "for nobody knows where I am, or what is become of me, so that I am entirely

buried as to the public, and cannot but say that it is a very great constraint upon me, for I am obliged very often not to stir from my room for fear of somebody noticing my face. I very often think that you would laugh heartily if you saw me going about with a single servant, buying fish and other things, and squabbling for a penny more or less. I have every day large packets to answer, without anybody to help me but Bohaldie. Yesterday I had one that cost me seven hours and a half." These packets included the correspondence of secret agents, of friends in England, and of the councillors about the French King—all the different machinery by which the great invasion was to be completed. Thus he waited secluded, with England in sight, till the ships were fitted out and the soldiers marshalled which should enable him to put his fortune to the touch—a moment of supreme anxiety, and yet more supreme hope.

The news reached London before long, and made the peaceful population tremble. Early in February, Horace Walpole, scoffing, supposes "the Pretender's son," then in Paris, was "as near England as ever he is like to be." But a week after his tone is mightily changed. The "imminence of our danger" are the words on Horace's lips. "Don't be surprised if you hear that this crown is fought for on land," he writes. "As yet there is no rising; but we must expect it on the first descent." "There is no doubt of the invasion," he adds, on the 23d February; "the young

Pretender is at Calais, and the Count de Saxe is to command the embarkation." His letters are full of excitement, alarm, and doubt. Nobody knew, it is evident, how far the people were to be calculated upon. The agitated Whig world, which felt itself on the edge of a revolution, on one side of the Channel, with Walpole for an interpreter, waiting an event which "to me must and shall be decisive," as he says, with an earnestness which, considering his perfectly private position, seems uncalled for; and, on the other, on the border of the separating sea, Charles Edward, eager, breathless, full of hope, waiting with a still more burning eagerness for the outset of the expedition,—make a curious picture. So deep were the apprehensions of the ruling Whigs among whom Horace lived, that the only real gleam of comfort he has is, that the populace, always so ready to be led away by a name, had been seized with a horror of the French invasion. "The French name will do more harm to the cause than the Pretender's service," he says. All this fright on the one hand, and hope on the other, came to an end without the striking of a blow. The French fleet was watched and pursued, and let slip, by the English admiral, old and prudent, who had been sent out to look for it; but another guardian, more potent than even an English fleet, watched the British coasts. "There have been terrible winds these four or five days," Horace writes, catching at the straw of good fortune. The storm "blew directly upon Dunkirk," beating back the in-

vading vessels. "Some of the largest ships, with all the men on board, were lost," says Lord Mahon; "others were wrecked on the coast, and the remainder were obliged to put back to the harbour with no small injury."

After all these elaborate preparations, this one storm sufficed to discourage France from her project. The royal exile, who had embarked so eagerly, was put ashore again, in that dejection which follows too triumphant hopes. A plan, so large and elaborate, collapsing so suddenly and utterly, has few parallels in history. In England, it is evident, nobody believed it was finished by this one encounter with the winds. "That great storm certainly saved us from the invasion then," writes Horace Walpole, in the middle of March. But of all the expedition, the only individual who seems to have thought more of it after setting foot on French soil, was the one princely heart, sick with disappointed hope, downcast, and heavy, but not crushed or helpless, who went back once more alone to the dreary little seaport, to wait some gleam of better fortune. To all the world around him his business was secondary. France, politely regretful, turned aside and went off to her own concerns. Jacobite England gave a doubtful, distant, sentimental homage, so long as the Deliverer would but keep away from her. Had the Prince been a man of his father's calibre, no doubt he would have dropped salt tears into the angry surf of the Channel that lay between him and his kingdom, and

abandoned the hopeless desperate attempt. But Charles Edward was of other mettle. The moment had come when he must do or die. Wild hopes of victory, no doubt, were in his mind; but it is evident that other thoughts—visions of the possibility of death on the field, a violent glorious end—were also present before him. The only thing impracticable was to return to the languid misery of Italian dependence—the death-in-life of his Roman captivity.

No hereditary enthusiasm for the house of Stuart moves the mind of the present writer; but he would be a passionless observer, indeed, who could look upon the forlorn and dauntless figure of this princely young man, gazing on his hereditary kingdom across the salt and bitter waves, and making up his mind to all the dangers, all the toils and hardships, of one last struggle for his rights, without a thrill of generous sympathy. He was no philosopher, to consider the weeping train of orphans whom his enterprise would leave fatherless; his was no cruel imagination, capable of realising the pitiless horrors with which a frightened country should stamp out the remnants of rebellion. Himself brave, clement, tender, and magnanimous, how could Charles Stuart conceive of the butcheries of Cumberland? The spirit of his race rose in him to its one last outburst. Error and misfortune ran in the blood—but the Adventurer on that lonely shore seems to have cast off for the moment the dreary memories of the English Stuarts and served himself heir to the noble old Jameses—gallant

monarchs of a barbarous-gallant people—the Commons' kings! The time had come when all the nobleness, patience, valour, and courage of the old stock should burst again into flower—one of its best blossoms, and its last.

So eager was the Prince to enter upon the great work of his life, that he proposed to the brave old Earl Mareschal to embark in a herring-boat and make his way to Scotland, with characteristic trust in the ancient heroic kingdom. But though it came to something very much like this in the end, at that moment he was dissuaded from such a venture. After a while he went to Paris, where he lived privately, wearily waiting for succour and encouragement from the French Court, then actually at war with England. "I have taken a house within a league of this town, where I live like a hermit," he writes to his father in the beginning of June. In November he is still no farther advanced. "As long as there is life there is hope, that's the proverb," he writes, in his weariness. "You may imagine how I must be out of humour at all these proceedings, when for comfort I am plagued out of my life with *tracasseries* from our own people, who, it would seem, would rather sacrifice me and my affairs than fail in any private view of their own." Already he had begun to see the disastrous influences which were in the field against him, and that the difficulties in his own camp would be as heavy a strain on his courage and patience as any without. "Our friends in Eng-

land are afraid of their own shadow, and think of little but diverting themselves," he adds, mournfully, "otherwise we should not want the King of France." By degrees he learned also that the King of France was little likely to aid him with more than vague promises of service. He was ready himself to set out with a single footman if necessary—to "put himself in a tub, like Diogenes!" he says, with half-ironic, half-pathetic humour. He begs his father to pawn his jewels, which "on this side the water he would wear with a very sore heart," in order to furnish the necessary funds for the undertaking. "The French Court sticks at the money," he writes in the spring of 1745, but he himself would rather "pawn his shirt" than fail. Those letters, though badly written and badly spelled, convey anything but an idea of an untrained or dull intelligence. All the grand drawbacks to success are clearly indicated in them—the indifference of France, the timidity and supineness of the English Jacobites, the factions and feuds and self-will of the Scotch. It is thus that he defends and explains his own motives, and the causes which led him to take the final step, in a remarkable letter, dated June 12, 1745, about six weeks before his arrival in Scotland:—

"After such scandalous usage as I have received from the French Court, had not I given my word to do so, or got so many encouragements from time to time as I have had, I should have been obliged in honour, and for my own reputation, to have flung myself into the arms of my friends, and die with them, rather than live longer in such a miserable way

here, or be obliged to return to Rome, which would be just giving up all hopes. I cannot but mention a parable here, which is, a horse that is to be sold, if spurred, does not skip or show some sign of life, nobody would care to have him even for nothing; just so, my friends would care very little to have me, if, after such usage, which all the world is sensible of, I should not show that I have life in me. Your Majesty cannot disapprove a son's following the example of his father. You yourself did the like in the year '15; but the circumstances now are indeed very different by being much more encouraging, there being a certainty of succeeding with the least help, the particulars of which would be too long to explain, and even impossible to convince you of by writing, which has been the reason that I presumed to take upon me the managing all this without even letting you suspect that such a thing was brewing. . . . Had I failed to convince you, I was then afraid you might have thought what I had a mind to do to be rash, and so have absolutely forbid my proceedings, thinking that to acquire glory I was capable of doing a desperate action. But in that case I can't be sure but I might have followed the example of Manlius, who disobeyed his father's orders on a like occasion. . . . Let what will happen, the stroke is struck, and I have taken a firm resolution to conquer or die, and stand my ground as long as I have a man remaining with me. I think it of the greatest importance your Majesty should come as soon as possible to Avignon, but take the liberty to advise that you would not ask leave of the French Court; for if I be not immediately succoured, they will certainly refuse you. And this refusal will be chiefly occasioned by our own people, who will be afraid to have you so near for their own private views, and so suggest things to the French Court, to prevent you coming till all shall be decided. I am certain if you were once at Avignon you would never be obliged to remove, but in order to our happy meeting on the other side of the sea.

"Your Majesty may be well assured I shall never be at rest, or leave other people so, until I bring about the happy day of our meeting. It is most certain that the generality of people

will judge of this enterprise by the success, which, if favourable, I shall get more honour than I deserve. If otherwise, all the blame will be thrown upon the French Court for having pushed a young Prince to show his mettle, and rather die than live in a state unbecoming himself. Whatever happens unfortunate to me cannot but be the strongest engagement to the French Court to pursue your cause. Now, if I were sure they were capable of any sensation of this kind, if I did not succeed, I would perish as Curtius did to serve my country and make it happy, it being an indispensable duty on me, as far as lies in my power. Your Majesty may now see my reason for pressing so much to pawn my jewels, which I should be glad to have done immediately, for I never intend to come back, and money, next to troops, will be of the greatest help to me. . . .

"I should think it proper (if your Majesty pleases) to be put at his Holiness's feet, asking his blessing on this occasion; but what I chiefly ask is your own, which I hope will procure me that of God Almighty upon my endeavours to serve you, my family, and my country, which will ever be the only view of your Majesty's most dutiful son, CHARLES P."

This letter is sufficient to demonstrate that Charles's imperfect education had tolerably well answered the purpose of all true training. Spelling was an art less considered in these days than now; but not the most chaotic spelling or schoolboy penmanship could obscure the manly, straightforward sentiments, or the serious, moderate resolution expressed in these lines. The father to whom they were addressed was an elegant penman, correct in style and orthography; but Prince Charles's homely sentences ring with a mettle and meaning unknown to the softer hero of the Fifteen—his style, if not that of a scholar, is always that of a man.

At last the little expedition got under way. It was in the middle of July, sixteen months after the failure of the proposed invasion, that Charles at last set sail from St Nazaire, at the mouth of the Loire. The vessel in which he embarked he describes as "a frigate" carrying "twenty odd guns, and an excellent sailer," which had been procured for him by "one Rutledge and Walsh," the latter of whom commanded the ship. A man-of-war of sixty-seven guns had been procured by the same private individuals, "to cruise on the coast of Scotland, and is luckily obliged to go as far north as I do, so that she will escort me without appearing to do it." In his own vessel he had "fifteen hundred fusees, eighteen hundred broadswords mounted, a good quantity of powder, ball, flints, dirks, brandy, &c. I have also got twenty small field-pieces, two of which a mule may carry, and my *cassette* will be near four thousand louis d'or." In the man-of-war was "a company of sixty volunteers, all gentlemen, whom I shall probably get to land with me, which, though few, will make a show, they having a pretty uniform." With these provisions the Adventurer set out dauntless, to invade a great, rich, and warlike kingdom. On the way his escort encountered a British man-of-war, and, disabled with the conflict, had to put back, carrying the sixty volunteers and their pretty uniform away to France again. Nor was it Charles's fault that his own vessel did not join in the combat. His captain threatened to order him down to the cabin ere he

would cease his entreaties to that effect. At length the lonely little ship, not without pursuit from other wandering cruisers, reached, after a fortnight's voyage, the Western Isles. As the invader approached the shore of one of those wild and rocky islands, an eagle came hovering round the ship. "Old Tullibardine, who first spied the bird, did not choose to take any notice of it, lest they should have called it a Highland freat in him." But when he saw the royal creature following the course of the ship, the heart of the old Highlander rose within him. "Sir, I hope this is an excellent omen," he said; "the king of birds is come to welcome your Royal Highness." At such a moment the whole party, thus arrived at the crisis for which they had been so long preparing, were naturally open to all influences; they looked "with pleasure" upon their winged attendant—at first the only mountain prince who welcomed Charles Stuart to the home of his fathers.

The story is so well known that it seems almost a work of supererogation to follow its details. The Prince's welcome was undoubtedly cold. He had been invited to Scotland by a parcel of conspirators—men whose lives were always in danger, and to whom a little risk, more or less, did not matter—not by the chiefs to whom he now appealed, who had life and lands, and the lives of their clansmen, to answer for. The condition of their rising had always been the support of a body of French troops—a kind of assistance which was not so revolting to the Scottish,

still less to the Highland mind, as it was to the English. When they found he had come among them alone, with seven men only in his company, a thrill ran through the islesmen. They tried hard to support each other in entreaties that he would give up his enterprise, and protestations that it was hopeless; but Charles had a thousand weapons to use against this simple heroic race. While he discussed the matter with several influential Macdonalds, headed by Clanranald himself, his quick eye noted a young Highlander standing apart, in whose face the tide of emotion ran high. While Ranald followed with moving lip and gleaming eye the course of argument—all entreaty on one side, all resistance and reason on the other—his hand sometimes seeking his dirk, his foot beating impatiently on the deck, the Prince saw before him the final plea by which he could overcome. Turning suddenly towards the agitated youth, "You at least will help me?" he said. Such an appeal could only have been made by a man himself still thrilling with the self-abandonment of youth. "I will!" cried the lad, with Highland fervour; "though not another man in the Highlands should draw a sword, I am ready to die for you!" This eager outburst of devotion, and the sudden emotion with which Charles, wound up to the uttermost, and at the point of despair, received the frank allegiance, was the spark that was needed to light the flame. Clanranald and his Duinhewassels, impervious to reason, had no shield to defend them from this sudden

enthusiasm. They do not even appear to have made any effort to resist it. The fire was set to the heather, and henceforth every passing breath did but fan the flame.

While this momentous conference was going on, other Macdonalds waiting at the other end of the deck, half informed of what was passing, and full of excitement, saw "a tall youth of a most agreeable aspect," whose looks moved them, they scarcely knew why. They were told sometimes that he was a young Englishman, sometimes a French abbé, anxious to see the Highlands; yet nature told them otherwise. "At his first appearance I found my heart swell to my very throat," says one spectator. One laird after another came and went from the isles and misty mainland to the little ship, the centre of so many fears and hopes. Each of them came with his burden of remonstrances, his intended protest against the mad enterprise; and each, like young Ranald, went away with fire in his heart and in his eyes, to raise his men and risk his life for the "native Prince," who had thus thrown himself on Highland devotion. Hugh of the house of Morar warned Donald of Kinlochmoidart that he "did not like the expedition at all, and was afraid of the results." "I cannot help it," said the other: "if the matter go wrong, I'll certainly be hanged, for I am engaged already." When Hugh himself went on into the all-fascinating presence, he lifted his voice, as they all did, in warning. The Prince made answer that "he did not choose to

owe his restoration to foreigners, but to his own friends; and that could he get but six trusty men to join him, he would choose far rather to skulk with them among the mountains of Scotland than to return to France." The next glimpse we have of this protesting Hugh, he is importuning "his young chieftain (Clanranald) to go ashore immediately, and raise as many men as might be sufficient to guard the Prince's person!" Thus Charles played upon them as a musician on his strings. They could not resist the contagion of his high spirit and chivalrous trust in them. What were lives or lands in comparison with that appeal that went to their hearts? Lochiel, too, "came convinced of the rashness, nay madness, of the enterprise," as Lord Mahon tells us in his admirable narrative, "and determined to urge Charles to desist from it and return to France till a more favourable opportunity." His brother Fassifern entreated him to send his decision by letter. "If this Prince once sets eyes on you," says the sagacious Highlander, "he will make you do what he pleases." But Lochiel, strong in his own prudence, went on like the rest to protest and remonstrate. The argument was long between the Adventurer and the chief. At last Charles brought it to a climax. "I am resolved to put all to the hazard," he said. "In a few days I will raise the Royal Standard, and proclaim to the people of Britain that Charles Stuart is come over to claim the crown of his ancestors, or perish in the attempt. Lochiel, who, my father has often told me, was our

firmest friend, may stay at home and learn from the newspapers the fate of his Prince." Against this final argument no Highland heart could stand. "Not so," said Lochiel, moved out of all prudence; "I will share the fate of my Prince, whatever it may be, and so shall every man over whom nature or fortune has given me any power."

This was the result of every personal meeting between Charles and the Highland chiefs. Those who kept aloof, in some instances, escaped the fascination. Sir Alexander Macdonald and the Chief of Macleod stood out prudently, withdrawing themselves from all intercourse with the royal suppliant. He landed on the mainland on the 25th July, surrounded by Highland guards, and a devotion all the more intense and priceless that it was tinged with despair, and began in that distant corner of the empire which he intended to conquer, the brief, brilliant, extraordinary campaign, four months of unexpected and half-miraculous triumph, which was to be followed by such overthrow, such suffering and calamity, as reason had predicted and enthusiasm defied.

We are obliged, in practical life, to judge by the common human standard of failure or success. And according to that standard, this enterprise, doomed from its beginning, and which even in the heart of its leaders was an alternative of despair, can be considered only as a piece of tragic folly, madly conceived and bitterly punished. But there are other views which, in the calm of ages, even the most piti-

ful spectator may be allowed to take, and which point out the great but difficult truth, that pain, calamity, and havoc are not the worst misfortunes that can befall either a nation or an individual. It is evident that Charles Stuart, with the instinct of a doomed man, felt that nothing which could overtake him could be so fatal and terrible as a return to his captivity. Had he died on Culloden field, had his boat been swamped by the bitter northern waves, and he himself disappeared for ever into their stormy abysses, it would have been well for the exile. What was ill for him was to leave that land in which he found himself, even in his worst privations, a man and a Prince, with an independent existence, and not a miserable puppet of fortune. Neither, perhaps, could better have been for the country itself, which thus rushed upon a glorious destruction, killing by one splendid act the old life which was doomed too, and must have died by inches had there been no Forty-five. It is something to call forth that highest bloom of antique virtue, that unequalled faithfulness, devotion, and honour which throw an everlasting glory upon the death-struggle of the Highland clans. It is something for a man to prove himself generous in victory, gay, friendly, magnanimous, and gentle, when fortune smiles on him—patient, tender, cheerful, and unrepining in the heaviest calamities. The man and the race embarked together in a venture which could not but bring tragic and terrible consequences to both. They did their best to overthrow

the foundations of all our national peace, and plunge us once more into the chaos from which we were escaping. They put everything on the cast, pledging their very existence, with scarce a possibility of ultimate success, and no hopes but those roused by emotion and excitement, without foundation or reality. Yet who can say that they did amiss? Ages of pitiful quiet in a borrowed palace were not worth that one brief year of life to the leader of this wildest of forlorn-hopes. And what would have been a century of ebbing existence, struggles with new customs, and sick efforts to retain the past, in comparison with the passion and agony of Celtic Scotland, thus accomplished, as it were, at a stroke, with accompaniment of some of the noblest emotions and greatest acts of which human nature is capable? They marched with the wild pibroch wailing over them, with waving plaids and antiquated shields, and hearts full of primitive virtues, passions, and errors, for which the world had grown too old, straight into the jaws of destruction—into the valley of death, into the mouth of hell. It was the end of a race, of a condition of things, of an ancient, noble, and most unfortunate dynasty. Valour unsurpassed, fidelity unequalled, mercy even, unlooked-for companion, marched with them, a guard of honour to the inevitable tomb. And in face of all after-horrors, all suffering, death, and ruin, let us say it was done well.

The standard was raised on the 19th of August in Glenfinnan. On the eve of this ceremony a party of

Keppoch's men, aided by a detachment of Camerons, surprised and took captive two companies of soldiers on their way to reinforce the garrison at Fort William —an auspicious beginning to the struggle. When Charles approached Glenfinnan with his body-guard of Macdonalds, he was chilled and disappointed to find it silent and desert, not a man yet of his host having assembled at the trysting-place. "Uncertain, and anxious for his fate," says Lord Mahon, "the Prince entered one of the neighbouring hovels, and waited for about two hours"—a dreary break in the high current of excitement which must have carried him along. At length the Camerons appeared defiling over the hill, six hundred valiant men, advancing "in two lines of three men abreast, between which were the English companies taken on the 16th, marching as prisoners, and disarmed." This sight alone was enough to raise to certainty the hopes of an enthusiastic and imaginative race. In presence of the triumphant Highlanders and the captive Southrons—emblems of the two races, no doubt, in many a sparkling Celtic eye—the standard flew forth to the Highland winds. It was unfurled by old Tullibardine —the Duke of Athole, as he was called, though his younger brother at the moment enjoyed the title and possessions of the house. "Such loud huzzas and schiming of bonnets up into the air, appearing like a cloud, was not heard of for a long time," says a certain Terence Mulloy, evidently repeating the description given by one of the prisoners. Old Athole

was above seventy when he threw forth those crimson folds into the Highland air and proclaimed King James. Gallant old age, dauntless youth, the enthusiasm of victory, the sullen silence of the captives amid all that wild outburst of rejoicing, make up another of the wonderful pictures of which this story is full. When Charles had addressed his Highlanders, he turned, courteous as a true Prince, to the English captain, who stood by. "You may go to your General," he said; "tell him what you have seen, and add that I am coming to give him battle;" and thus dismissed with chivalrous promptitude the honourable enemy. "No gentleman could be better used than he was," adds the authority we have just quoted. In word and deed, as in outward bearing, the young paladin bore himself like a knight of romance. He put on with his Highland garb the spirit of his earlier forefathers.

Immediately after this ceremony, and not more than a month from the moment of his landing, in his eagerness to encounter Cope, whom he had thus promised to meet, Charles marched sixteen miles in his boots; "and one of the heels coming off, the Highlanders said they were unco glad to hear it, for they hoped the want of the heel would make him march more at leisure. So speedily he marched that he was like to fatigue them all." Whatever his army had to bear, he took a share in their privations. He lived hardly, slept on the heather by their side, marched at their side across moor and hill, watched late and

rose up early, like a man to the manner born. He did what was more astonishing still in that age and on such an enterprise. He paid for everything his army consumed, insisted on the strictest discipline, punished all marauders, and had his accounts kept with the precision of a private household. The wild clans came down from the hills full of the instinct of plunder, with the Adventurer at their head, who firmly believed himself the rightful Prince of the rich country through which they passed. Had they cleared everything before them, it would have been a natural result to be expected in the circumstances; but nothing of the kind appears to have taken place. "It was not uncommon, indeed," says Lord Mahon, "for the Highlanders to stop some respectable portly citizen as he passed along, levelling their muskets at him with savage and threatening gestures; but on being asked by the trembling townsman what they wanted, they usually answered, 'A bawbee!'" Charles himself levied contributions from the towns through which he passed; but he suffered no invasion of the rights of private property. In the *Jacobite Memoirs* will be found an entire account-book, with all its quaint details, interspersed with bits of pathetic history, showing the careful regulation of his expenditure. "The Prince paid well for everything he got," says the steward who furnished this remarkable record, "and always ordered drink-money to be given liberally where he lodged." His courteous generosity to his prisoners has already been mentioned.

When called upon to rejoice that his enemies were at his feet, he turned away compassionate, lamenting the fate of "his father's deluded subjects." And when urged to make reprisals upon the English captives for cruelties inflicted on his friends, his high nature revolted against the suggestion. "I cannot in cold blood take away lives which I have spared in the heat of action," said the noble young Adventurer; nor would he even threaten to do so, saying, with still greater magnanimity, that it was below him to make empty threats which he never would put into execution. It was with the greatest difficulty that he was forced to answer the proclamation of the Government offering a reward for his own head, by a counter-proclamation setting a price on that of the Elector of Hanover. His rival and contemporary Cumberland, unfortunately, was not moved by so fine a sense of honour. Throughout the story, indeed, Charles shows himself the *preux chevalier* to whom, alas! permanent victory is slow to come. His was not the genius of battle, nor the merciless policy which could take advantage of all chances. A tender heart and noble consideration for others are, no doubt, qualities of a great leader; but these have rarely been exhibited for the benefit of the enemy. Charles was not a great leader; he was a spotless knight. His foe disarmed was, if not his friend, at least his fellow-creature, to be dealt with in a spirit of splendid humanity: the very assassins who threatened his own life called forth, at worst, a pitiful contemptuous mercy. Such

a character, while it rouses all the generous admiration of which the mind is capable, awakes at the same time a pang of compassion. It is doomed from the commencement of its career. It is unqualified for that bloody arena which is no longer governed by the laws of knighthood. The general whose compassionate soul melts over his enemy's forces, who has not the heart to shoot a traitor or keep a prisoner, whose mind is set on conducting his warfare by feats of personal valour, by lofty generosity and consideration, can never win more than Charles won—a swift, short, brilliant campaign; until the common herd, surprised, takes courage in its numbers; and the rude soldier, careless of blood or suffering, resumes his hard supremacy. It is Cumberland, shooting the wounded on the field, giving no quarter, crushing down the country with his iron boot, who wins the day.

The march of the Prince and his followers as far as Edinburgh was in its way a royal progress. Cope having taken himself out of the way, too timid or too prudent to try his fortune among the Highland passes, had withdrawn by sea to the low country, and left the path clear for the invaders. As they marched, stream after stream joined them; here an entire clan, there a smaller party. The gentlemen of the country joined the Prince's march after the Highland line was passed, bringing true hearts and stout courage, if not so many additional broadswords. When any doubtful man fell in his way, his elo-

quence and charm of manner had its usual effect. "An angel could not resist such soothing close applications," said Cluny Macpherson, lately captain in the Hanoverian service, but soon at Charles's side with all his clan. He lived with them all like a brother, falling into their patriarchal familiar habits. Even his own royal affairs and melancholy family life were talked of among the genial affectionate company. At Nairn House, on the way south, "one of the company happened to observe what a thoughtful state his father would now be in, from the consideration of those dangers and difficulties he had to encounter with, and that upon this account he was much to be pitied, because his mind behoved to be much upon the rack. The Prince replied that he did not half so much pity his father as his brother; 'for,' said he, 'the King has been inured to disappointments and distresses, and has learnt to bear up easily under the misfortunes of life; but poor Harry! his young and tender years make him much to be pitied, for few brothers love as we do.'"

This reference to the melancholy Roman home completes the picture. In the midst of his dangers the Prince has a sigh to spare for the brother into whose life this wild and bright romance was never to fall. Poor Harry! who made no struggle for any rights, real or supposed, but placed his cardinal's hat, like a weight of stone, forbidding all possibility of resuscitation, upon the grave of the Stuarts. No such possibility was then apparent; but yet his

gallant brother grieved for the lad, left alone, with nothing better than a hunting-party to stir his blood, in place of the swelling tide of life in his own veins. In Athole "he was very cheerful, taking his share in several dances, such as minuets and Highland reels." In almost every great house he passed, some little feast was prepared for the Chevalier. When he entered Perth it was amid acclamations, but with one louis d'or only in his pocket, the last of the 4000 he had brought with him. Thus the most fatal risk and the strangest triumph, universal acclamations and absolute destitution, all lightly borne with the sweet daring of youth, mingled in his life. The merchants at the fair, notwithstanding his poverty, "received passports to protect their persons and goods;" and to one of them, a linendraper from London, the royal gentleman courteously addressed himself, bidding him tell his townsfolk that he should be at St James's in two months. In the morning he rose early to drill his troops; in the evening left the ball, as soon as he had danced one measure, to visit his sentry-posts. No time was there in his busy life for unprofitable thoughts. And yet there was time enough for full consideration of what he was doing in all its aspects. We cannot refrain from quoting here a remarkable letter, printed in the *Jacobite Memoirs*, and said to be written from Perth to his father in Rome, though we are obliged to add that the only evidence for its authenticity is the fact that it was found in Bishop Forbes's collections. It expresses, at least, sentiments

which we know by indisputable testimony to have been spoken by Charles:—

"PERTH, *September 16th*, 1745.

"SIR,—Since my landing, everything has succeeded to my wishes. It has pleased God to prosper me hitherto even beyond my expectations. I have got together thirteen hundred men, and am promised more brave determined men, who are resolved to die or conquer with me. The enemy marched a body of troops to attack me; but when they came near they changed their mind, and, by taking a different route and making forced marches, have escaped to the north, to the great disappointment of my Highlanders; but I am not at all sorry for it; I shall have the greater glory in beating them when they are more numerous, and supported by their dragoons.

"I have occasion every day to reflect on your Majesty's last words to me—that I should find power, if tempered with justice and clemency, an easy thing to myself, and not grievous to those under me. 'Tis owing to the observance of this rule, and to my conformity to the customs of these people, that I have got their hearts to a degree not to be easily conceived by those who do not see it. . . . I keep my health better in these wild mountains than I used to do in the Campagna Felice, and sleep sounder lying on the bare ground than I used to do in the palaces in Rome.

"There is one thing, and but one, in which I had any difference with my faithful Highlanders. It was about the price upon my kinsman's head, which, knowing your Majesty's generous humanity, I am sure will shock you, as it did me, when I was shown the proclamation setting a price on my head. I smiled, and treated it with the disdain I thought it deserved; upon which they flew into a violent rage, and insisted on my doing the same by him. As this flowed solely from the poor men's love and concern for me, I did not know how to be angry with them for it, and tried to bring them to temper by representing that it was a mean, barbarous principle among princes, and must dishonour them in the eyes of all men

of honour; that I did not see how my cousin's having set me the example would justify me in imitating that which I blame so much in him. But nothing I could say would pacify them. Some even went so far as to say, 'Shall we venture our lives for a man who seems so indifferent of his own?' Thus have I been drawn in to do a thing for which I condemn myself. Your Majesty knows that in my nature I am neither cruel nor revengeful; and God, who knows my heart, knows that if the Prince who has forced me to this (for it is he that has forced me) was in my power, the greatest pleasure I could feel would be in treating him as the Black Prince treated his enemy, the King of France—to make him ashamed of having shown himself so inhuman an enemy to a man for attempting a thing, whom he himself (if he had any spirit) would despise for not attempting.

"I beg your Majesty would be under no uneasiness about me. He is safe who is in God's protection. If I die, it shall be as I lived, with honour; and the pleasure I take in thinking I have a brother in all respects more worthy than myself to support your just cause, and redeem your country from the oppression under which it groans (if it will suffer itself to be rescued), makes life more indifferent to me. As I know and admire the fortitude with which your Majesty has supported your misfortunes, and the generous disdain with which you have rejected all offers of foreign assistance, on terms which you thought dishonourable to yourself and injurious to your country; if bold but interested friends should at this time take advantage of the tender affection with which they know you love me, I hope you will reject their proposals with the same magnanimity you have hitherto shown, and leave me to shift for myself as Edward III. left his brave son, when he was in danger of being oppressed by numbers in the field. No, sir, let it never be said that to save your son you injured your country. When your enemies bring in foreign troops, and you reject all foreign assistance on dishonourable terms, your deluded subjects of England must see who is the true father of his people. For my own part I declare, once for all, that while I breathe I will never consent to alienate one foot of land that

belongs to the crown of England, or set my hand to any treaty inconsistent with its sovereignty and independency.* If the English will have my life, let them take it if they can; but no unkindness on their part shall ever force me to do a thing which may justify them in taking it. I may be overcome by my enemies, but I will not dishonour myself; if I die, it shall be with my sword in hand, fighting for the liberty of those who fight against me.

"I know there will be fulsome addresses from the different corporations of England; but I hope they will impose on none but the lower and more ignorant people. They will no doubt endeavour to revive all the errors and excesses of my grandfather's unhappy reign, and impute them to your Majesty and me, who had no hand in them, and suffered most by them. Can anything be more unreasonable than to suppose that your Majesty, who is so sensible of and has so often considered the fatal error of your father, would with your eyes open go and repeat them?

"Notwithstanding the repeated assurance your Majesty has given in your declaration that you will not invade any man's property, they endeavour to persuade the unthinking people that one of the first things they are to expect will be to see the public credit destroyed; as if it would be your interest to render yourself contemptible in the eyes of all the nations of Europe, and make all the kingdoms you hope to reign over poor at home and insignificant abroad. . . .

"I find it a great loss that the brave Lord Marishall is not with me. His character is very high in the country, and it must be so wherever it is known. I had rather see him as a thousand French, who, if they should come only as friends to assist your Majesty in the recovery of your just rights, the weak people would believe came as invaders. There is one man in this country whom I could wish to have my friend, and that is the Duke of Argyll, who I find is in great credit among them,

* This would seem to refer to an offer of assistance from France, on condition of the surrender of Ireland, which is mentioned in some contemporary documents.

on account of his great abilities and quality, and has many dependants by his large fortune; but I am told I can hardly flatter myself with the hopes of it. The hard usage which his family has received from ours has sunk deep into his mind. What have those princes to answer for who by their cruelties have raised enemies not only to themselves but to their innocent children?"

On the 15th of September the city of Edinburgh, in which the Whig party had a stronghold, was plunged into the wildest commotion. The fire-bell was set tolling on the sober Sunday afternoon while all the population were at church. Frightened and excited, the townspeople rose in the midst of the sermons, some of which at least were far from complimentary to the approaching Prince, and rushed out into the streets, where the train-bands of the town were assembled, and through which Hamilton's dragoons were marching on the way to defeat and flight. Then there ensued a scene of extravagant farce in the midst of the heart-rending tragedy. It is almost Shakespearian in the depth of contrast. The volunteers cheered the dragoons; and the dragoons, scarcely less faint-hearted in the moment of danger than their amateur coadjutors, replied by answering cheers and the clash of their doughty swords. At these sounds the Edinburgh wives and mothers, fresh from the influences of the interrupted sermon, were seized with such a panic as, to do them justice, women are seldom assailed by when patriotism demands a sacrifice from them. They clung to their valiant defenders with tears and outcries. Why should a husband and

father risk his precious life against the wild Highlander, whose trade was fighting? The honest burghers felt with their wives that the idea was monstrous. They melted away imperceptibly, stealing off through friendly close and sheltering wynd; and when their captain looked round, outside the gate, he found himself followed by the merest handful, not more than a score of men! Such a satire upon human nature could scarcely have been perpetrated by any poet. It is history alone which dares to indulge in such wild ridicule of its subordinate figures. While the trembling militia pulled off their rusty blades in the sacred seclusion of home, the wild eager enemy outside their gates dispersed almost by a breath the troopers who had made bold to go and look at them; and its chiefs once more summoned the city to surrender. The bailies met and talked and trembled, and could not tell what to do. They tried to gain time and negotiate, hoping in Sir John Cope, who was about landing at Dunbar. All the next day was spent in their futile frightened struggles. But early on Tuesday morning, Lochiel, with five hundred Camerons, took the matter in hand; and the burghers and their wives woke up to find that, with less trouble than they had experienced in getting out of their uniforms, the Highlanders had taken possession of their city!—a strange little dramatic touch of laughter in a story too full of tears.

The scenes that followed have been so described as that none may venture to repeat them. Yet as

the stranger treads the long-deserted floors, and lingers in the recessed windows of that gallery at Holyrood, hung with all its impossible kings, he will find another picture come up before him with a pathos too profound for words. All those gallant soldiers doomed to so speedy and violent an end—the winding-sheet high on their breasts, as the superstition of their country says—some to perish on the scaffold, some under the brutal *coup de grace* of Cumberland's butchers; one, the highest of all, reserved for a more lingering, more dreadful fate;—all those fair women, whose hearts, for a moment gay, were to be wrung with what tortures of anxiety, what vain efforts, what sickening hopes! Never could be more pathetic merry-making than Charles Edward's ball in the old house of his fathers. The coronach seems to sound over the strathspey, mingling its wail with the rustle of the light feet, with the "snap" of the characteristic melody. We are all familiar with the poetic contrast between that "sound of revelry by night" and the distant echo of the fatal guns which broke up the brilliant crowd. But the eve of Waterloo was nothing to that eve, behind which shadowed darkly not only Culloden, but the Tower and the block—the traitors' heads set up on the gates, the noble hearts plucked quivering out—all the nameless horrors of the scaffold; or that escape at the cost of all that makes life supportable, which in some cases was more terrible still.

We cannot go over in detail all the military vicissitudes of that strange year. It is evident that almost

from the first there was a conflict of authority. Lord George Murray, an able and experienced but stubborn and self-willed general, defends himself in his narrative with a vehemence which savours something of wrong on his part; but throughout the story the persistent shadow of another figure, almost as active as his own, comes in to spite and harass the movements of the Commander-in-Chief. "Mr O'Sullivan then came up," is the signal for confusion, for contravention of legitimate orders, and loss of men. O'Sullivan, one of Charles's companions from the outset—an Irishman, doubtless, bristling with points of national opposition to the kindred yet different race—does not send any voice out of the darkness to explain his own conduct; but it is evident that he headed such an opposition as, useful enough in constitutional struggles, is fatal in war, and that he thwarted wherever he was able, and set permanently on edge, the only captain of the Highland forces who had the head of a general. Lord George was interfered with, stopped in his work, driven to the length of resignations, self-defences, despair of any real good; while Charles, no doubt, felt over again more bitterly than ever, what he had said before the beginning of his enterprise, that his friends would "rather sacrifice me and my affairs than fail in any private view of their own." He had nobody great enough to take the lead by such force of genius as could not be withstood.

> "O for one hour of Wallace wight,
> Or well-skilled Bruce, to rule the fight!"

he might well have exclaimed; or even, if not that, of Berwick or Maurice of Saxe to be supreme and above all question. What downright valour could do the little army did. It stormed across Scotland, sweeping before it the panic-stricken troopers who had fought well enough on other fields. It defied, with claymore in hand, with wild outbursts of contemptuous triumphant song, not only Johnnie Cope, but more manful leaders. "Follow me, gentlemen," said the Adventurer, on that field of Prestonpans, in the chill daybreak, "and by the blessing of God I will this day make you a free and happy people!" He had slept among his Highlanders that night on the pease-straw among the ricks. He had crossed the moss with them, sinking in the uncertain soil. When the sudden shameful rout of their opponents left them masters of the field, he remained there through the day to give orders for the care of the wounded and the safety of the prisoners. But his was not the genius which could combine and direct. He could animate, encourage, fight with his soldiers, share all their hardships; and a certain intuition of what was wisest, being boldest, seems to have been in him; but he himself was not born to be a great general—which was well for England, perhaps, though ill for him.

In four months the handful of men which at the outset had been scorned as banditti and helpless savages, had won all Scotland, with the exception of two or three strongholds, and had overrun England in such a rapid raid as other Stuarts in other days

had attempted,—without meeting with any check. The Prince reached Derby on the 4th of December. His rapid progress and amazing successes struck the very soul of the English Government with terror. Horace Walpole, once more discussing the situation, gives up Scotland as lost; and London itself thrilled with terror, less perhaps of the new reign than of the petticoated Highlanders, who were likely to carry havoc into the city. And yet the invaders were totally unequal to the defensive forces of the country. Marshal Wade had ten thousand men at Newcastle when the Highland army passed the Border. The Duke of Cumberland was forming another army in the midland counties—militia was being raised on all sides—and the whole wealth and credit of the empire were embarked against the Adventurer. The reader stands aghast to see the little army, "barely five thousand fighting men," in the very heart of England, with all the troops of the kingdom in arms against them, and more than their own number of Hessians just imported to help King George to hold his own. How did they get there? how did they get away again through the mazes of successive armies? A march more marvellous, a success so wonderful, has scarcely ever been recorded in history. Almost every qualified critic concurs in the conclusion, that had Charles and his soldiers had their simple will and pushed on, blind to the tremendous risks of their position, to London, they would have carried victory with them, and taken possession of the capital of

England as easily as they did of Edinburgh. It is said that the trembling Premier shut himself up for a day, to consider whether he had not better declare for Charles, when the news came of his arrival at Derby; and that King George had his treasures embarked and his vessels prepared at the Tower ready for escape. The armies stood impotent, gazing at the unexampled foray — the nation stood passive, with a stupid amaze, gazing too, to let events settle themselves. The only active living figures in that grim pause of fate against the great silent background of expectant England, are the wild forms of the mountaineers, daring and eager — the princely young Captain at their head, as eager, simple, and fearless — and the anxious chiefs between. They were less than a hundred and thirty miles from London. They had driven away like chaff every antagonist that had yet ventured to look them in the face. They had glided between and around the stupid masses of soldiery, who outnumbered them twice over. What was to arrest their victorious course? Fortune for once was on the Stuarts' side: a few days longer, and all would have been won.

It was at this moment, against all probability and all true wisdom, that the Highland leaders seem to have come to their senses. The laws of ordinary prudence suddenly, at the most unpropitious hour, came back to them. They opened their eyes as from a trance, and felt their position untenable. What they do not seem to have perceived was, that their

position had been untenable from the first outset; that laws of every kind had been defied; and that in the utter daring and mad valour of their expedition had been and might be its success. By all military laws they had no right to be where they were. The conclusion they ought to have drawn from this was clearly the simple unscientific conclusion drawn by Charles and the common men of his army, to persevere in their wild triumphant way to the end. But the trained soldiers thought otherwise. At Derby, heaven knows why, neither sooner nor later, they awoke from their passion of fight and victory. The light of common day returned to them. A panic of reasonableness, good sense, and strategical rule came back upon them. It was such an exhibition of the foolishness of wisdom as seldom strikes the eye. Why they should have pulled up there of all spots in the world; how it was that the eloquence, the entreaties, "the soothing close applications," the tragic protest of the unhappy Prince, which had once moved them to the risking of life and fortune, should have lost all its potency now, who can tell? It was as if a forlorn-hope, carrying all before it, had suddenly bethought itself that it was a branch of a regular army, and must return to the punctilios and symmetrical movements of dignified warfare. Such was the strange revolution of feeling that arrested Charles on his way. It was no defection of heart, no faltering of courage. These men were all as ready to die for him as when, hopeless yet dauntless, they had pledged him their

Highland faith. But all at once it had flashed upon them that they were doing their work as men had never done it before; "*C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre.*" The danger was no way increased, the path was as open, every augury of success as fair before them as at the moment of starting; but at last the irregular impetus had failed, and the laws of their trade, and the long-forgotten precautions of prudence, came back too late to the minds of the generals. Prudence was madness in their then position, but, mad as it was, it carried the day.

To this awakening, however, many different reasons had conduced. First of all was the old and stubborn Scottish prejudice against leaving or remaining long absent from their native soil—a prejudice, no doubt, built upon very sufficient foundation and recollections of disaster, but put in force too late, when retreat was worse than advance. Then the fact that England did but stare at them and stand aloof, had no doubt an intensely depressing effect upon men who were compelled to take all the circumstances into consideration, and could not go on blindly like knights-errant. It had been promised them that England was ready to take up arms, that France was ready to send help and succour. Such promises had been made to Charles himself, and he too in his silent heart had borne the shock of disappointment. But his generals could not take it silently. To this let us add, that the divisions among them were gradually growing more bitter. It is said that Charles himself

was wilful, and fond of his own way; but of this there is little direct evidence, so far as the conduct of the war is concerned. He had all but forced them over the Border, it is true, vowing that he would go alone if no man would follow him; but there is little trace in the various narratives of absolute interference on his part. Lord George, though evidently feeling himself an injured man, repeatedly records the fact that the Prince relinquished his own will in deference to the opinions of his officers. But with all these adverse circumstances against them, and little more than their attachment to the Prince's person to inspire their courage, it is natural enough that their endurance, strained to the uttermost, should have given way. Unfortunately, a sudden fit of prudence after daring is in most cases fatal. They had gone too far to go back. When they turned they virtually gave up the conflict, renewed the courage of their adversaries, and relinquished the immense advantages of enthusiasm and confidence which had been their own.

To Charles this blow was all the more terrible that it was quite unexpected. "He arrived at Derby in high spirits," says Lord Mahon, "reflecting that he was now within a hundred and thirty miles of the capital, and that neither Wade's nor Cumberland's forces any longer lay before that object of his hopes." He had even begun in the lightness of his heart to consider the question whether he should enter London on foot or on horseback, in an English or Highland dress. It was the last night of triumph to the Che-

valier. The dawn of the winter morning brought with it a miserable change. The chief officers of his army waited on him at break of day, headed by Lord George, the Commander-in-Chief. The proposition they laid before him was nothing less than to abandon the attempt on England, which up to this time had been so strangely uninterrupted, and to retreat to Scotland. They laid before him their diminished numbers, the apathy of England, the silence of France, the thirty thousand men who might at any moment gather round them, and prevent the escape of a single soldier; the risk of his own person. All these arguments were suddenly poured upon Charles's indignant astonished ear. He tried again his powers of remonstrance, of entreaty, of sudden appeal—all the arts that had once vanquished his fond yet half-unwilling supporters. What was his life to him in comparison with his cause? "Rather than go back I would wish to be twenty feet under ground!" he cried. With the fervour of a man arrived at the crisis of his life, and to whom the question was desperate, he confronted all those gloomy disappointed chiefs who had been so true to him, and yet so hard upon him. It might mean a scaffold to them: to Charles it meant death spiritual and moral, shame, downfall, a lingering agony. Desperately he pleaded with them, imploring them to do anything but retreat. Of all the silent stubborn assembly, Perth alone, young, chivalrous, and hopeful as himself, stood by him; and he who once had fascinated all hearts—he

whose words had charmed away prudence, and made life itself seem but sweet as a weapon to serve him —had to see his prayers put aside, his arguments neglected, and no answer given to his appeal. The debate went on for hours, but the unhappy Prince would not yield. When the council broke up, he tried once more pathetically what his old skill in persuasion was good for. They had baffled him together; they might yield to him separately. Something of the simplicity of an untrained mind is in this last attempt. He trusted in his power of moving their hearts as a girl might trust in her beauty; but the influence was no longer fresh and novel. His captains had become used to the pleadings of their Prince. Perhaps he had tried too often that mode of government. The moment was come when fact and probability had returned to reign over them, shutting their ears to all appeals. The men faced him, when he sent for them, as steadily alone as they had done together. His hour and power were over. At that moment, when fortune still seemed to smile on him, and his neighbourhood struck terror into the hearts of his enemies, Charles must have passed through the very bitterness of death.

The same evening the council was again called together, and "Charles sullenly declared his consent to a retreat." Sullenly perhaps, sadly—with his heart broken and his high hopes quenched, who can doubt? Disappointed of the prize that seemed so near, the last stroke which would have roused all his

friends to his succour; disappointed in the very love which now seemed to fail him—in the dead silence of the country round, out of which so many promises had come—in the sickening unresponsive quiet in which he was left, to do his best or worst, heaven and earth looking on, not aiding. It was then, and not when the stimulus of personal danger called him back to himself, that Charles Stuart bore the blow that was worse than death. There, and not on Culloden, the natural result of that decision, should be noted the real end of his extraordinary campaign.

Nor was he alone in his misery. Next morning, when the army set out in the grey twilight, "the inferior officers and common men believed that they were going to fight the Duke of Cumberland, at which they displayed the utmost joy. But when the daybreak allowed them to discern the surrounding objects, and to discover that they were retracing their steps, nothing was to be heard throughout the army but expressions of rage and indignation. "If we had been beaten," said one of their officers, "the grief could not have been greater." But the soldiers had to yield, silent with rage and dismay, and trudge back again the weary dangerous way, uncheered by the glorious hopes which had drawn them thither; while the Prince, ready to weep such tears as would not have misbecome his manhood—his heart broken, his countenance changed, all his princely suavity and charm gone from him—came tardily and dully in the rear. At that terrible moment his dignity forsook

him along with his hopes. In the frightful revulsion of feeling, the poor young hero, still so young, shows for a moment like a petulant child. Instinctively he felt that all he had struggled for was lost. What need now to be up with the sun, to brush away the early dew, to hold out the longest and march the strongest of any of his men? He had done so, and this was the end. Now he fell back into the exhaustion of lost hope. On his way south he had given up his carriage to one of his aged followers, and had traversed the long plains merrily on foot, sometimes at the head of one clan, sometimes of another, in the Highland dress, with his target slung over his shoulder. He would not even stop to eat, but snatched his dinner when he could, threw himself lightly on whatever bed might be possible—the open field, if no better was to be had—and slept till four o'clock in the morning, when he was astir again. But now all this was over. Every other trial he had borne bravely, but this Charles did not bear well. He could not hide the change in his face; he made no further effort; lingering in the rear, late in the march, he rode on moody with a petulant misery. The test of this disappointment was too much for him. It is the only point in the brief and wonderful story in which the hero falls below his position. And yet the reader forgives the unhappy Chevalier. If ever man had reason to be cast down, it was he.

"I believe," says Lord Mahon, in whose careful and close narrative the mass of existing material is

condensed and set forth with equal judgment and power, and whose principles do certainly not incline him to favour the Stuarts' cause—"I believe that had Charles marched onwards from Derby he would have gained the British throne." It is evident that he felt this conviction himself to the depths of his heart. But Providence did not mean to give the race that last chance. When the Highlanders turned their back upon England, the last possibility was over for the house of Stuart.

The retreat thus sadly begun was scarcely less wonderful than the march. It was accomplished with a speed and safety quite extraordinary in the circumstances; but, nevertheless, it moved like a funeral procession across the western border, men and leaders having alike lost temper and lost heart. The strict discipline of the earlier part of the campaign failed under this trial. The mountaineers, lowered in their own estimation, went back to their old instinct of plunder. The Prince, sore at heart, exacted fines from the towns he passed, where the popular enthusiasm for the successful leader had changed, with the usual treachery of the mob, into vexatious opposition. Manchester was mulcted in £5000; Dumfries in £2000. Glasgow, always adverse, was laid under "a most heavy requisition to refit the Highland army." One transient gleam of renewed success burst upon them at Falkirk, reviving the spirit at once of the soldiers and of their leader; and a decisive battle seemed imminent. The prospect

roused all the old enthusiasm. It was Cumberland this time who was advancing to meet them, and the hearts of the Highlanders were all aglow. But again the chiefs stepped in with proposals for retreat. A kind of infatuation seems to have possessed these fated men. Their mountains attracted them with some unreasonable fatal fascination. They promised Charles in spring an army of "10,000 effective Highlanders," and in the mean time the reduction of the northern forts, if he would but withdraw now, and seek safety among the hills. Only the night before, Lord George, once more at the head of the malcontents, had shown to the Prince a plan for the battle with Cumberland's army, which Charles had corrected and approved. Once more the rage of disappointment overwhelmed the unfortunate Adventurer. "Good God! have I lived to see this?" he cried, dashing his head against the wall with the wild passion of his southern training. But again the chiefs, masters more absolute than any king, prevailed. The inevitable battle was postponed from the links of Forth, where their followers were gay with victory, to the dreary Culloden moor, where, starving, destitute, and desperate, the hopeless encounter had at length to be. Thus the bitter crisis was re-enacted. And hard must the heart be, and dull the imagination, which will not own at such a moment a pang of intolerable pity for the heart-broken Chevalier and his lost cause.

The retreat, for the first time, was made in confusion, of which poor Charles, sick at heart, yet ever

generous, took the blame upon himself. Drearily, with heavy thoughts and lessening numbers, the little host pursued its fatal way towards the hills. As the disastrous march proceeded, money failed, and even food, as well as patience and hope. The wild winter-bound mountains afforded no supplies to the wanderers. The succours which had always continued to drop in in minute doles from France fell into the enemy's hands—one ship in particular, with £10,000 in gold and 150 soldiers. The Highlanders had to be paid in meal, "which the men, being obliged to sell out and convert into money, it went but a short way for their other needs." Even the meal failed by-and-by. On the eve of Culloden, one biscuit served to each man was the sole provision of the five thousand, who, weary, dispirited, and chilled to the heart, had to meet, on this poor fare, an army of nearly 9000 well-fed and carefully-appointed soldiers. Courage alone held out, the last prop of the unfortunate. When Lord George advised a night-march to surprise Cumberland in his camp, even at this dismal conjuncture Charles rose and embraced the general who had served him so ably and thwarted him so cruelly. But Drummossie Moor and Prestonpans were different. The men were worn out. The wintry darkness and cold, intensified by want, stupefied even the mountaineers. Their progress was so slow that this project, like so many others, had to be given up. Wearily the doomed army went back to arrange itself in line on the black hopeless moor, and wait the

battle. Nobody seems to have had heart enough left even to compare the dismal omens of this field with what might have been had Cumberland been met at Falkirk, or to cast the contrast in the teeth of the captains who had retreated only for this. Hungry, cold, and worn out, after a sleepless night and foodless day, the Highlanders stood up to meet their fate. The Macdonalds had not their usual place, which seems to have moved them more than fatigue or want. "We of the clan Macdonald thought it ominous that we had not the right hand in battle as formerly at Gladsmuir and Falkirk, and which our clan maintains we had enjoyed in all our battles and struggles since the battle of Bannockburn." This punctilio did what starvation could not do. "My God! have the children of my clan forsaken me?" cried gallant Keppoch, in his death-pang,—no doubt with a pang more sharp than death. While the Macdonalds stood sullen without striking a blow, the other clans, fighting the fight of despair, broke, fell, and perished before the fatal force and overwhelming numbers of their adversaries. "Nowhere," says Lord Mahon, moved out of his composure to a swell of sympathetic eloquence,—"not by their forefathers at Bannockburn—not by themselves at Preston or at Falkirk—not in after years, when discipline had raised and refined the valour of their sons—not on the shores of the Nile—not on that other field of victory; where their gallant chief, with a prophetic shroud (it is their own superstition) high upon his

breast, addressed to them only these three words, '*Highlanders, remember Egypt!*'—not in those hours of triumph and glory was displayed a more firm and resolute bravery than now in the defeat at Culloden." But human strength has its limit, if not human bravery. For the first time since they set out from their mountains eight months before, the Highlanders fell before their enemies. The tide had turned—their day was over—and the first lost battle was the last.

And Charles, into whose mind it is evident such an idea had never entered—Charles, who could not believe that when the encounter came, man to man, anything on earth could stand before his mountaineers—saw this destruction from the height where he stood watching, with sudden tears of passion and anguish, with wonder, incredulity, and despair. He could not believe it. Probably it was the stupefaction of amaze and horror that prevented him rushing down into the fatal *mêlée* and dying like his ancestor at Flodden, the best fate his best friend could have wished him. "In the lost battle, borne down by the flying," he stood aghast in a terrible surprise. He was urged, some say, to put himself at the head of the stubborn Macdonalds and attempt another charge; others tell us that he was prevented by force from taking this desperate step, O'Sullivan seizing his horse by the bridle and forcing him from the field. All the narratives combined leave upon the reader's mind the impression that Charles was stupefied by the unex-

pected calamity. He had felt his cause was lost, but never that it was so lost as this. As he turned his back upon the fatal moor where his poor Highlanders lay dying, in this bewilderment of amaze and despair, a certain Ned Burke, a poor Highland caddie from Edinburgh, came up to the little knot of reluctant fugitives which surrounded the Prince. "There were very few along with him," the faithful fellow says, "and he had no guide." "If you be a true friend, endeavour to lead us safe off," said Charles; while the enemy's fire, according to this humble observer's story, was so close and hot about that his horse was killed under him, and his groom by his side. This address was "an honour Ned was not a little fond of, and promised to do his best;" and thus began the most wonderful tale of adventure, privation, absolute trust, and unequalled fidelity that our records or those of any country have ever known.

The little party seems at this time to have consisted of two of the Irish gentlemen whom Charles had brought with him, Lord Elcho, and an aide-de-camp called Macleod. For several days they wandered sadly, but not entirely without hope, finding refuge in the houses of the lairds, most of whom, like themselves, were fugitives, if not slain on the field—houses where shelter was to be had, if nothing else. But this life was too luxurious to last. Some ten days after, having worked their way northward, the forlorn party took boat and set out for the isles. Here another heroic Highlander, Donald Macleod of

Gualtergill, in Skye, came to the aid of the little company. He was their guide by sea as Burke was by land. His clan was one of those which had held aloof; his chief was (in words at least) an active enemy of Charles; and he himself was an old man, beyond the impulses of youth. But all these deterring influences did not hold him back. He met the Prince "in a wood all alone," and his heart swelled within him. "You see, Donald, I am in distress," said the Chevalier, with his old grace; "I throw myself into your bosom: I know you are an honest man, and fit to be trusted." "When Donald was giving me this part of his narrative," says Bishop Forbes, "he grat sore; the tears came running down his cheeks, and he said, 'Wha deil could help greeting when speaking on sic a sad subject?'"

No eloquence can surpass these words. With this faithful pilot at the helm, the forlorn party coasted the barren isles, putting in now and then for rest or food, encountering all the storms of that wild sea, drenched with its frequent rain, sometimes hungry, always weary, outcasts of the land and sea. Yet, strange to tell, in these miserable wanderings, the reader, with a lump in his throat, finds again the gallant young Chevalier of Glenfinnan and Holyrood. He of the retreat, petulant, complaining, reproachful, came to an end in the last catastrophe which completed his ruin. In the toilsome mountain-paths, in the huts he had to creep into on hands and knees, in the boat storm-tossed upon that melancholy sea, it

is no sullen fugitive, but a noble, cheerful, gallant soul, making the best of everything that befalls, uttering no plaint and refusing no human sympathy, that appears before us. He makes merry, like the valiant gentleman he was, over his privations. When no better fare is to be had, he swallows the Highland *drammock*, oatmeal mixed with water—on this occasion sea-water—and calls it "no bad food." Nothing daunted him in this last chapter of his wondrous adventures. When his poor followers were sinking under fatigue and want, he sang them songs to keep up their hearts—sometimes their native Gaelic songs —sometimes, doubtless, God help him! the soft Italian strains he had sung in the Palazzo Muti, with gaping English spectators looking on, and a hundred impatient ignorant hopes in his heart. Never once do we find him flagging from his wonderful patience. From wild isle to isle, from tempest to tempest, now almost within prick of the bayonets sent out against him, now tossed on waves that threatened every moment to swallow his poor boat, a ruined, destitute, forsaken wanderer, his high spirit never failed him. A price of £30,000 was set upon his head, and every island and bay swarmed with soldiers eager to win that reward. Yet the Prince went fearless from cabin to cabin, from guide to guide, trusting everybody, and never trusting in vain. The extraordinary fidelity of the crowd of lowly mountaineers, who might have betrayed him, has been celebrated to the echo: never was there a more wonderful instance of

popular honour and devotion. But the man who trusted so fully should not go without his share of honour. He was afraid of no man, chief, vassal, or robber; he threw himself upon them with a generous confidence. Perhaps a forlorn hope that he might yet find himself at bay and sell his life dearly, may have crossed the mind of Charles. But whatever it might be that buoyed him up, the fact is clear, and it is a noble one, that never word or murmur broke from him amid all his hardships. His playful talk, his jests, the songs he sung to his poor followers, the smiling, patient front with which he met all his sorrows, form another picture as touching, as noble, and as melancholy as ever was made by man.

We cannot linger even on that romantic episode of Flora Macdonald, which has proved so attractive to all romancers. The brief bit of heroism has writ the name of the Highland girl on the immortal page of history, higher than many that have taken a far greater place in the world's eye. Even at this saddest strait of Charles's fortunes there is that gleam of humour in the gloom which makes the story more pathetic than any outcry of sorrow. When Flora and Lady Clanranald went to dress the fugitive in the woman's dress he was to wear, "it was not without some mirth and raillery passing amid all their distress and perplexity, and a mixture of tears and smiles." When he parted with the brave girl, whom he called with tender grace *our lady*, a momentary gleam again came upon the anxious faces of the spec-

tators at the scandalised looks of another lady's-maid, who described Miss Flora's attendant as "the most impudent-looking woman she had ever seen." "They call you a Pretender," said good Kingsburgh, into whose hands he fell next, still in those troublesome garments which he did not know how to manage, "but you are the worst of your trade I ever saw." In Kingsburgh's homely house, while all the inhabitants were thrown into wild anxiety for his safety, he himself, glad as a wanderer only could be of the night's rest and comfort, playfully struggled with his host for a second bowl of punch, and "laughed heartily" as he put on again his feminine gear. His long walks, now with one guide, now with another, are full of a simple human fellowship which goes straight to the heart; though the reader at the same moment perceives with a thrill of pitiful emotion, in the snatches of rude conviviality which now and then break in upon the gravity of the record, one of the germs of ultimate ruin. Be it Malcolm Macleod, or Donald Roy, or any other of his many conductors, the heart of the wanderer unfolds itself to the humble friend by his side with a brotherly openness. When his anxious companion proposes with Highland brevity to shoot a suspicious wanderer who may chance to be a spy, the generous Prince at once interferes. "God forbid that any poor man should suffer for us, if we can but keep ourselves any way safe!" he cries. "He used to say that the fatigues and distresses he underwent signified nothing at all, because he was

only a single person; but when he reflected upon the many brave fellows who suffered in his cause, that, he behoved to own, did strike him to the heart." When he dozed in his weariness, he would wake with a start, crying, "Oh, poor England! poor England!" yet the next moment, when his boatmen were struggling with the waves, "to divert the men from thinking of the danger, he sung them a merry Highland song." Thus cheerful, sorrowful, resolute, and all-enduring, Charles Stuart struggled through six months of such hardship as would have killed any ordinary man. If it was the mere instinct of life which kept him afloat, the mere necessity which makes it impossible for a valiant spirit to yield and acknowledge itself beaten, or if some desperate hope of better things, waxing stronger as his circumstances grew worse, sustained him, it is impossible to tell. He went through a hundred deaths, and survived them all. There is even some indications that this terrible interval was bitter-sweet to him, full as it was of friendship and devotion. And the observer feels that here he should have died. Death would have made the story complete—an epic beyond all competition of poetry; but death under such circumstances must be a crown too splendid for the exigencies of common humanity. It does not come when its presence would complete and perfect the round of life. Charles lived as Napoleon lived, as men live every day after existence is over for them; surviving to add some vulgar or pitiful postscript to the tragedy which might have been

completed so grandly—a postscript more tragically instructive, perhaps more painful and appalling, than that brief and solemn dropping of the curtain which follows a well-timed death.

And accordingly Charles survived. He lived to get back to France, to reign the hero of the moment in Paris until the time came when France and England swore peace. A year after his return from Scotland, such hopes as might have preserved a feverish life within him were crushed to the earth by the news that his young brother Henry had become an ecclesiastic, and received the Cardinal's hat—an act which was nothing less than rolling the stone to the door of the sepulchre in which hope was buried. Nevertheless he went and came, to Spain, to the French Court, wherever he could get a hearing, to seek help for a new expedition, with a longing after England which is more touching than mere ambition. It is like the efforts of the drowning man to snatch at any straw which might preserve him from the cold waters of death in which he felt himself sinking. But nobody held out a hand to the lost soul. One vain last struggle he made, not to be sent out of France, resisting foolishly, with something of the petulance he had shown on his retreat, the power against which he could not stand. But fate was against him in all his struggles. Against his will, in spite of a mad resistance, the deadly quiet of Rome sucked him back. Shipwrecked, weary of life, shamed by his knowledge of bitter things,

consumed by vain longings for a real existence such as never could be his, the Chevalier sank as, God help us! so many sink into the awful abyss. To forget his misery, to deaden the smart of his ruin, what matters what he did? He lost, in shame, in oblivion, and painful decay, the phantasm which was life no longer—with other fantastic shadows—ill-chosen wife, ill-governed household, faithless and foolish favourites, a staring silly spectator-crowd—flitting across the tragic mist. A merciful tear springs to the eye, obscuring the fatal outlines of that last sad picture. There sank a man in wreck and ruin who was a noble Prince when the days were. If he fell into degradation at the last, he was once as gallant, as tender, as spotless a gentleman as ever breathed English air or trod Scottish heather. And when the spectator stands by Canova's marble in the great Basilica, in the fated land where, with all the Cæsars, Charles Edward has slept for nearly a century, it is not the silver trumpets in the choir, nor the matchless voices in their *Agnus Dei*, that haunt the ear in the silence; but some rude long-drawn pibroch note wailing over land and sea—wailing to earth and heaven: for a lost cause, a perished house, and, most of all, for the darkening and shipwreck and ruin of a gracious and princely soul.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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